My Irish Year

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IRISH PARLIAMENT HOUSE, COLLEGE GREEN, NOW THE BANK OF IRELAND.
(From a drawing by Miss Myra K. Hughes. By permission of the artist.)

MY IRISH YEAR

BY

PÁDRAIC COLUM

WITH 15 ILLUSTRATIONS

MILLS & BOON, LIMITED
49 RUPERT STREET
LONDON W.

DA9
C723m

Published 1912

TO

ONE OF THE HIGH MILESIAN RACE

FOR KINDRED, COURAGE, COMRADESHIP

THIS MUCH OF ME

INTRODUCTION

"My Irish Year" is not representative of the whole of Ireland: Catholic and Peasant Ireland only is shown, and this Catholic and Peasant Ireland is localised in a strip of country crossing the Midlands to the West. There is nothing of historic Munster in these pages; nothing of East and South Leinster; nothing of Ulster—neither of the Ulster of the Presbyterian farmers so ably described in Mr Robert Lynd's "Home Life in Ireland," nor the wider Ulster that is Catholic and Gaelic. The cities, Dublin, Belfast, and Cork, each with its distinctive life and atmosphere, have not been brought into the book.

Within the locality described the author has been too much inclined, perhaps, to view the life in its agrarian aspect. The current set up by the Gaelic League, affecting the revival of language, music, dances, and games, has not been given due appreciation, and the life—or rather the form of decay—that

exists in the country towns has not been fully shown. Still, if not representative of the whole of Ireland, "My Irish Year" is representative of a great part of Ireland. The life described may stand for the life of the Catholic peasantry. And the Catholic peasantry are not merely the bulk of the Irish population; they are, roughly speaking, the historic Irish nation.

Besides its geographical boundary, some readers may be aware of another boundary in this book. That boundary is in the writer's mind: his tradition puts him definitely with the peasant, the nationalist, and the Irish Catholic.

"My Irish Year" is composed of studies made while living among the people of the Midlands and the West. Some of these studies were published in *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Nation*, and the author returns thanks to the editors of these journals for permission to republish. Acknowledgments are also due to Messrs Chatto & Windus and to the Cuala Press, Dundrum—to Messrs Chatto & Windus for permission to include the "Horned Women," a story given in Lady Wilde's "Ancient

Legends of Ireland," and to the Cuala Press, Dundrum, for leave to publish the old ballad, "Cavan Races." To Miss Beatrice Elvery, to Myra K. Hughes, to A. E., to Mr Paul Henry, to Mr Wm. MacBride, to Mr E. A. Morrows and to Mr Jack B. Yeats the author returns thanks for permission to reproduce their beautiful and distinctive pictures.

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PART I

THE MIDLANDS

CHAPTER I

A SURVEY

I STOOD in the middle of Ireland; the wind that came to me had blown across the wide space of the bog of Allen; the road I had travelled ran back to the valley like the dried bed of a river. If you hump up the index-finger against your thumb, the knuckle of the digit will indicate the elevation I had reached. The road before me was straight and level.

It was young in the morning. People were working in the fields. I spoke to one of the men.

"It's a good day."

"A good day indeed, thanks be to God."

"Has the priest passed this way yet?"

"He hasn't passed this way."

I was going to a "station" at Farral Markey's house, and as the priest had not passed, I was in good time. I loitered and surveyed a country so spacious that the carts that creaked upon the road would have taken the whole of a day to cross the bounds of my vision, travelling east and west, south and north. It was in stretches of bog and patches of arable land. Clumps of trees were around certain farm houses. And now three figures approached, a grandmother, a young child, and an old man. They, too, were going to Farral Markey's. I joined them, and we went along the level road.

Twice a year in parts of rural Ireland a "station"

is held. A priest comes to a farmer's house, says Mass, and remains on to hear confessions. In the old days, when chapels were few, the custom of holding "stations" was common. "Stations" have more to do with the hearing of confessions than with the saying of Mass. What I was going to assist at was called a station only to distinguish it from a Mass in the chapel, for it was not an official visitation. A young priest, a relative of the Markeys', was saying Mass for a congregation of his relatives. It was a local or rather a family festival. We encountered Farral's brother on the way. Peter was dressed for the festival, but he had taken off his black coat and was trimming the hedge with a bill-hook. He put the bill-hook on his shoulder and came on with us.

The two brothers had the name of being miserly —certainly they never wasted an hour of the day. But if there were grasp in the family, it must have been with the elder brother. Peter was rather like the Irish peasant of the harsh English caricature, that is to say, he was a creature apart from the people who read newspapers; he had an ungainly face, with the long upper lip and the wide mouth that has been so often caricatured, but his eyes were simple and kindly. When we entered the house, Farral Markey greeted us; to each of his visitors he said, "You are kindly welcome." Farral Markey had not the open mouth and the simple gaze of his brother; his mouth was tight, and his eyes were screwed to penetration. Men and women were in the house, but the priest had not yet come. As we waited for him we talked of the season. The

women spoke humorously, the men spoke gravely; the women were concerned for the fuel, the men for the crops. The rain had injured the oats, the hay and the turf. Farral Markey said, "There are three very desolate things, oats lying, hay lying, turf lying, and turf lying is the most desolate of the three." It was like a sentence out of the Old Irish Triads.

The priest shook hands with us all; then, with the acolyte, he went into the room that had been made ready. After a while we followed. The beds had been folded back into their presses, a white cloth was spread on a little table, and wax candles were lighted each side of the sacred text. We knelt down. No one was conscious of the fact that here two great and ancient pieties were reconciled. Yet the Latin words and the long-descended service might stand for one idea, and the peasant house, the kneeling family, the instruments of labour, might stand for another.

In this part of the country it is not the custom for women to sit down to a meal with the priest. The women waited in the kitchen, and the priest, the peasants and myself sat down to our particular breakfast. We had tea, bread and butter and eggs, and, in honour of the festival, a bottle of wine was put upon the table. Farral Markey entertained us with dignity. At first we talked of the amendment in the drinking habits in the country. Farral Markey told us of the time when no man would leave the fair without having taken drink; even if he were sober, a man would stagger on the road so that he might not lose the reputation of being a gallant

fellow. Now all that is changed; if a man drinks at all, he will be likely to conceal his fault. The long campaign against intemperance in Ireland, inaugurated by Father Matthew in the forties, is responsible for this. The talk of the peasants at that table was mostly of their own surprising security. Old Patrick told us that, thirty years ago, he heard a priest say that the time would come when their hardships under the landlords would be told as a story round the fire—a story to startle the children. He never thought he would see the day when they would be clear of the menace of landlordism. The old men became impassioned upon this topic, and we, who had some dim memory of the eighties, realised that the security behind this modest comfort was indeed remarkable. A clean cloth was spread upon the table, the peasants were well-clothed, the room was fairly furnished. In the old days, if a landlord, or a landlord's hanger-on, saw such a display, the rent would have been raised on the Markeys'. Farral Markey gave us the motto with which his old landlord justified his exactions, "The higher you load your horse, the tighter he will draw."

The breakfast for the women was being prepared when we went into the kitchen. A boy was reading the prophecies out of Old Moore's Almanac. "September: a great war threatens Europe. The Austrian Empire, long a foe to the Infidel, is threatened with wars and dissensions. . . . October: unhappy France finds too late the evils consequent upon her infidelity. . . . England will soon have cause to repent of her alliance with a Pagan Power."

THE BOG.

(From an oil painting by Paul Henry. By permission of the artist.)

"Arrah," said one of the women, "will you read us something that will make the people's teeth chatter in their heads with terror?" "December: in this month will pass away a determined enemy of Ireland. Fortified by her long struggle and united under her trusted leaders, Ireland advances towards her place amongst the nations—DIA SAOR EIRE."

As soon as breakfast was over, the Markeys left the house. Peter took up the bill-hook and went back along the road, and I saw Farral opening a gate and crossing hurriedly to his work in the bog. The priest and myself were part of the road together. He had been ordained for the foreign mission, and he would leave Ireland in a few weeks. Some years hence I might see him again, when he would be taking a holiday in Ireland. Then he would be a capable Irish-American priest with something of a "hustle" upon him. We parted at the cross roads.

And now I had the clouds for company. The heather of the bog ran into the deep grass that grew each side of the roadway. Big broad-leaved poplars stood up into the light. The bog, each side of the road, had colour and expanse, and the bog myrtles that grew out of the bog had the sun upon their leaves. There were black patches where the bog had been cut to the ooze. The canavan or bog cotton was scarce; against the blackness of the cut-away bog it showed a few tremulous white heads. So far, the empty brown road had gone between low ditches. Now untidy hedge-rows began to hem it in, the fields had no cultivation; in one, a party of crows were making savage depredation; in

another, five or six heads of young black cattle huddled themselves together; they were strangers still to this part of the country.

On the road I met a young man, a student from Dublin, who talked with the gloom of a Russian intellectual. "The people here lack the will," he said, "the passion for life." He was infected by the new Irish Drama. Their lack of will is consequent on their way of marrying. Here a woman's dowry is considered first, and the woman herself afterwards. A marriage is just a bargain. The children of such marriages can have little of the passion for life. "Look at the dog there," he said, "he does not bark at us even. The people have the same lack of aggressiveness."

I agreed that we have the lowest marriage rate in Europe. The young reformer went on to say that our system of marriages does not produce people with passion enough to create a desirable life for themselves. That is why America has such an attraction for our people. They find there a desirable life ready made.

I agreed that emigration is due to many other reasons besides economic ones. There are no centres of interest or amusement in the country.

"And there is little freedom," said my friend. "No social freedom you may say. Last Sunday, in the next parish to this, I heard a priest declare from the altar his intention of putting down dancing in his parish. And this, after a sermon against emigration. He is a patriotic, earnest priest, and he is working hard to create a tolerable economic situation. It is strange that he does not understand that

a desirable social life is as necessary as a tolerable economic life. There is no political freedom either. A political orthodoxy dominates this country. A political boss has been able to suppress the Gaelic League here. Some shop assistants who presume to belong to a different political organisation have been forced to leave the country. It's no wonder American becomes an idea—the idea of freedom and the fulness of life."

. . . . . .

The Irish country town is harsh and ugly, for it has been built by people who are still in the pastoral stage. The street is wide for the movement of herds. Four out of every five are public-houses. In the depths of these shops, one can see bacon and boots, reaping machines, and sacks of lime. One might borrow money in such a shop, or book one's passage to America. All the business of the town is parasitic, if we except the harness-makers, the coopers, and the cart-builders. The people in their shops grow rich. They can give big dowries with their daughters, and munificent gifts to the Church. These traders can send their sons and daughters to the secondary schools and the University. The only other people in Ireland who can do this are the Civil servants and a few graziers.

There is neither fair or market to-day, and the town looks dead. Before the steps of the Court-house three or four men are standing in discussion; their appearance is provincial rather than rural; they are members of the District Council, and they had a meeting to-day. Three or four young men, who have a certain fierceness of aspect, assemble

near. They have ash plants in their hands, and one might guess that there was a question of awarding labourers cottages at the meeting to-day. There is a discontented party within the labour group; it breaks up, and the men part shaking ash plants, and shouting threats at each other.

Besides its main street, the town has its bog road. The bog road goes off at the single arm of a sign-post. It opens to the brown region of the bog, while the main street leads to the grazing country. In the latter street the houses are thatched, and some show a cup and saucer in the window as a sign that refreshment is provided. Here there is the cart-builder's stall. I am always taken by the round, bright-coloured wheels that are soon to travel on the road. They stand against the wall of the house. Inside the stall a boy has his bare feet in the shavings and sawdust, and two youths are daring each other to lift the bar of the axle. The cart is on the stocks, and the cart-maker is planing its timbers; he tells me of the many timbers that go into the cart, deal for the body, and larch for the shafts; ash for the round of the wheel, and oak for the felloes.

. . . . . .

I pass by one of the hovels that are disappearing from the country-side. The old, dishevelled man who lived in it is standing in the middle of the road. We talked together for a while. He told me his age. "Then," said I, "you remember the famine." He turned his head away. "The famine," said he, "God knows I remember it." I shall not forget the look of shame and distress in his eyes. He had heard the bells ring in the Catholic Chapel for the first time

THE ZITHER-PLAYER.

(From a water-colour drawing by Jack B. Yeats. By permission of the artist.)

since the penal laws were put in force. After he told me that, he began to speak vehemently. As a young man he had gone once to one of the great demonstrations organised by O'Connell. It was the demonstration at Tara. "The night before," he said, "thirty of us slept in the one bed—a ploughed field it was. We thought that Dan was going to give us a word. But he didn't speak it. After that the heart was taken out of the country." The word that the men of Ireland waited for that day was the word for insurrection. Had O'Connell given it, a hundred thousand Irishmen might have been shot down, but Ireland would have something braver to think of now than the misery and beggary that followed O'Connell's retreat. She would have won her Constitution then, and not Ireland alone, but the bi-insular group would have been stronger, richer and more courageous, because of the adjustment that would have followed a desperate outbreak.

. . . . . .

It was dusk when we came to the house where the dance was to be held. The white geese lay before the black turf-stack, and the goats stood under the upturned cart. We went into the unlighted house. A tall girl greeted us. I did not see her face, but from the fashion of her clothes I guessed she was an emigrant returned for a while. Our first topic was life in the States. The girl of the house told us that in America she used to go to Galway festivities because she liked the Connacht dances. Abroad, our people are held together by kinship, and the family group extended because the County Association, which is the Irish social organisation in America.

The girl who had brought me to the house was also a returned emigrant; she talked humorously about the people of Clare County. "They'd like you to believe that the wealth of the world was in their county, and that they only went abroad to see the people." The girls laughed; both had gone to America to earn their dowries. "They never feed pigs in Clare; oh no," said the other girl. "Here we don't believe that the pig gets his meal properly unless he gets it by the fire." "I'd never say that to the foreigners," said the other girl. "The Germans say that the Irish are reared amongst pigs and horses. The Germans live better than us, but they're poor, too. They have to leave their country." A young man who came in just then talked of the pig with more gravity. He could make forty pounds a year by keeping two sows, he told me.

Before the dance the people kept in separate groups. The young girls sat in the chimney-nook, and the men stood in the shadow. A couple of old people sat by the big wooden cradle. There were nearly forty people in a room, fourteen feet by twelve. After some dances in the kitchen, we shifted to the barn. The floor was damp, but we danced with great energy. The dances were neither graceful nor elaborate. I had heard the priest denounce these "half-sets" as importations from the back-lanes of Scotland. The boys said the girls did not approve of the Irish dances because the "swinging" in them was not vigorous enough.

Someone once told me that the bright-haired Milesian type was disappearing out of Ireland, and that the surviving Irish type would be Iberian and

dark-haired. There were no bright heads there. Man after man, girl after girl, was dark of hair and face. The barn, lighted by the guttering candles, the long forms with various groups of young men and women, the dancers on the floor, suggested more than one of Goya's Caprices. The barn was lighted by candles stuck in the wall. The chickens in the corner wakened up and complained in the soft voices of partridges. The dance ended while it was still young in the night. Very peaceably we returned across the country.

CHAPTER II

RURAL ECONOMY

I. The Conquest of the Land

In 1879 there was a failure in the potato crop in Ireland. The failure was not complete as in 1846, but it was more than partial, and in some parts of the country the crop was less than one-fourth that of previous years. The corn crop too was under the average. A thrill of apprehension went through the country; the horrors of the famine of 1846-47 were still remembered; "clearances" had been carried out, and further "clearances" were threatened by owners of property. But the year 1879 does not stand for disaster in Irish agrarian history. Aid from the outside was forthcoming, and relief was prompt and well organised. Parnell and his colleagues formed one relief committee, and the Duchess of Marlborough formed another; money came in; it was subscribed in Ireland, in England and Scotland, in places abroad, and especially in the United States. From February till late in August, relief was distributed to those who had need of it; as much as six stone of meal in the week was given to households in which the family was large, as little as one stone in the week was given to the old man or the old woman living in a hut alone.

The disease that follows scarcity broke out; flour

and necessary nourishment were granted to households in which there were cases. Late in the crisis Parliament enacted measures for further help; relief works were undertaken, and facilities and powers for borrowing money were granted to landlords and to Boards of Guardians; the landlords were to expend in improving their estates, and the Boards of Guardians in purchasing seeds. With seed available, the fatality certain to follow on a year of failure was averted. A farmer whose valuation was £15 or under, might obtain for seed a hundred of potatoes and fourteen stone of oats; for these he was debited with a sum which he repaid in four instalments of £1, 4s. 6d.

In our every-day potatoes we have a momento of the crisis of 1879; the Board of Guardians went to Scotland for the new seed; the "champion" potatoes was brought over to us; in two years no other potatoes but the "champion" was planted.

The year 1879 marks an epoch in our agrarian history. Its hunger gave force to a movement which was to destroy landlordism. On the other hand, its misery and beggary produced a depression the effects of which still remain.

In 1879 the tenant farmers had obtained a certain security of tenure, but the rents they were compelled to pay were exorbitant. The people had been forced back to scramble for a livelihood on the land, and they were prepared to bargain for the soil as people in a besieged city bargain for bread. When a landlord turned out a tenant, he could always get two others to bargain for the holding. The rents paid were competitive, and often they were made up

by wages earned in England and Scotland, or by money sent home from America. The pinch of famine forced the people to claim abatements in rents, and the landlord who refused such claims got no rents at all that year. The Land League had been established; now the agitation was carried into every district in Ireland, and the man who had stood without a coat on his back, waiting for the charity meal, now asserted his right to the earth he tilled, and the fruits thereof. Meanwhile the intelligent people of the County Mayo had discovered a weapon which proved effective against the landlord who was ready to evict, and the land grabber who was ready to take over the tenant's holding. Their discovery is named after Captain Boycott, who was the first to have experience of the new interdict. He made the people of Ireland familiar with this wise and simple social operation by a letter written with the object of making material for a new Coercion Act. Landlordism was now attacked with resolution and intelligence. The year 1881 marked an advance towards tenant liberation. In that year an act was passed through which gave the tenant his land at a " fair " and not at a competitive rent.

But the land agitation went on. The year 1903 closed the epoch of revolution. The Act passed in that year enables the tenant to purchase his holding. The landlord is paid in cash from the Treasury, and the tenants pay back the purchase price in annuities extending over sixty years. Meantime the whole of Ireland is in pawn for the amount involved in the transfer of the land. Sixty millions of money has been already expended, and one hundred and

twenty millions more will be expended in completing the transfer. The money is being raised on the security of the British Treasury, but every penny of the hundred and eighty millions is being debited to Ireland.

II. La Terre qui Meurt

Let us go back again to the year 1879. When those who remembered '46 and '47 looked upon wasted fields again, they thought it plain that the will of God was against the people of Ireland. They instructed their children to believe that Ireland was a woeful land, and that any country under the sun was better than the place they were born in. The young saw the crowds standing outside the house where the Relief Committee met. "The Irish spirit, so much lauded, was completely broken down," writes a friend who had assisted at such scenes, "and the people appeared like menials." These scenes of beggary and misery were impressed upon the minds of the younger generation. The mother of fine girls proclaimed loudly that they were starving at home, and the father of stalwart sons stood in a snow-storm, in his bare feet, and without a coat on his back. One may be sure that the pot boiling with the charity meal was not forgotten by growing boys and girls. And from the other side of the Atlantic friends calling to them to leave the beggarly land. The hope of every boy and girl was to get away. My elders tell me of a parish priest who used to say, "Now, boys and girls, there's a good crop of

potatoes, and let me see that I'll be making a good many marriages." That was before '79. Afterwards the people did not take life in that easy way. For years after the marriage register in our parish was a blank. Emigration became an exodus; life on the land became something to resent, the agricultural lore and the tradition of good labour lapsed. Abnormal emigration, abandonment of tillage, contempt for agricultarul employment; these are the effects of the depression of 1879.

III. Land and Labour

The settlement of the labourer has gone with the settlement of the tenant farmer, and as a result of a series of enactments, beginning in 1883, we have in every district in Ireland, scores of neat cottages with garden allotment. The Irish agricultural labourer can now obtain a cottage with three rooms, a piggery, a garden allotment of an acre or half an acre, and for this he is charged a rent of from one to two shillings per week. The expense of building the cottage, and of providing the garden allotment that goes with them, is incurred by the Rural District Council. The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, recently reminded the labourers that half their rents were paid for them by the rate-payers and the tax-payers of Ireland. Over three and a half millions have been expended so far on these cottages and allotments, and a great deal more money is forthcoming.

On the whole, these cottages by the wayside give

a hopeful aspect to the country. They are neat, well-built, and sanitary, and compare favourably with the old mud-walled and mud-floored cabins.

The labourer of the new dispensation begins outside the bad tradition which forbade a display of taste about a house. Flowers are before the door of the new cottages, and there are creepers upon the walls. The labourer can keep pigs, poultry and a goat, and grow his potatoes and vegetables in his garden allotment. Generally speaking, his acre or half-acre is well cultivated.

In relation to the agricultural interest the situation of the labourer's cottage is not satisfactory. In Scotland the agricultural labourer is directly associated with the farm upon which he works. He lives within its gates, its problems and possibilities are constantly before his mind, and from the time when they can open a gate, his children are in the way of becoming intimate with the manifold business of agriculture. With us, the labourer's connection with the farm is intermittent; the farms are small, and, for the greater part of the year, they are worked by the farmer and his family. The labourer's children grow up, not inside a farm-stead, but upon the roadway, and they miss that which should be in the mind of a good agriculturist before he is fifteen — that which makes a great part of his wisdom—an intimacy with cattle and horses and the stock of a farm. We have not the good agricultural labourers that we once had. The minds of the people have been turned away from the land, tillage has not been developed, and our young labourers have not had the opportunity of acquiring the full lore of the

agriculturist. An instance given by Mr T. P. Gill, makes us realise how far we have departed from friendship with agriculture. In the Agricultural Training School for the Midlands, Ballyhaise, Co. Cavan, the Department has been forced to introduce milking machines for the dairy cattle—the girls can no longer be got to do the milking.

The labourer with us obtains from 9s. to 12s. per week at intermittent work. When times are urgent he takes a higher wage. If you speak to him about the labourer, the farmer will insist that he is not worthy of his hire. He will not put heart into a day's work, he will come one day, and stay away another, he will break off in the middle of the day and not come back to the field again. If you speak about the Irish labourer to a farmer in England or Scotland, you will hear a more pleasant account. About 25,000 Irish labourers work in England, and Scotland for several months of the year. The farmers of Scotland and England give a good account of the quality of the migratory labour. A Scottish agriculturist, Mr Munro Ferguson says :—

"In the East of Scotland a great part of the agricultural work is done by workers from Ireland, who come over, mostly from Mayo and Sligo. They are the best workers that we know—extraordinary conscientious workers. We are supposed to work fairly hard in Scotland, but I heard one of my best tenants say, that he liked to have one or two Irishmen about him to keep his men up to the mark." [1]

What is the reason for the contrast between the slackness at home, and the strenuousness abroad?

[1] Quoted by Mr Gill in his pamphlet.

Mr Gill implies that better wages (20s. to 25s. per week) supplies the motive for the better service. But I would take it upon myself to say, that with present conditions, a farmer in Ireland who paid his labourers at the Scotch and English rate, would not get the labour out of the men that the Scotch or English farmer gets. It is good living that gives the impulse for good work. In Scotland or in England the labourer is well nourished. In Ireland he is hardly nourished at all. The labourer who comes to an Irish farmer, begins his day with a breakfast of bread and tea. He comes back from the field to a dinner of potatoes, cabbage and Russian bacon. Tea is sent down to the fields to him. He needs the stimulus of tea again, or else he feels that he needs porter. A man cannot do a good day's work upon this hardly nourishing diet. The farmer feeds himself and his family as badly as he feeds the labourer. White bread and tea for breakfast, potatoes, cabbage and foreign bacon for dinner, and tea again, again and again. The price of eggs is now so good that few farmers will keep them for their household, and as the creameries take over the milk, churning is not done in the house, and buttermilk may not be got.

Almost everyone in Ireland is badly fed, and this is not because food is scarce, but because food is overlooked. A farmer will start for the Fair at an early hour in the morning, having taken for breakfast only tea and bread. He will stay at the Fair all day without taking a meal, but stimulating his energies with two or three glasses of whisky. If you meet him in the evening, the man will appear drunk. Day after day he takes the same dinner;

potatoes, cabbage, American or Russian bacon. Soup is never made in his house, and cabbage is the only vegetable grown for his household. There is no longer the supply of milk and butter that there used to be, when the churning was done in the house. The people have ceased to make porridge for breakfast and supper. Tea is taken at every hour in the day. In the country towns, one cannot get proper food properly cooked, the ordinary dinner served to men in the eating-house is a hard beef-steak with bread and tea. Formerly the people lived on milk and potatoes, and their good looks and vigour impressed writers so different as Borrow and the Rev. Mr Hall. "How is it you have so many fine children?" says the lady mentioned in "Hall's Tour." "An't please your ladyship's noble honour we blame the potatoes," said the peasant woman. In those days when a man came from the fields, he put some handfuls of meal in a quart of buttermilk and drank it off. Now he takes a mug of long-drawn tea—"tea so strong that it would brand a lamb," as the people say. Pork, butter, milk, and eggs are sold and the people buy foreign bacon, bread made from American flour, and tea at as high a price as 3s. 4d. per lb. The want of nourishment more than climate is behind that lack of force that is noticeable in Irish life.

The raising of store cattle bulks as the largest industry connected with Irish land. But in 1905, the value of eggs, poultry, bacon, and dairy produce exported, exceeded the value of cattle raised in this wasteful way. Butter-making is in the way of becoming the most important Irish industry, but it

is interrupted because Irish butter-making ceases about September. Next year the Irish farmers have to conquer the English markets again, going into competition with the Danish farmers, who hold their markets all the year round. The creation of winter dairying is the main problem before Irish agriculturists. It has to be done by the farmers keeping a batch of cattle to calve in the winter, and by feeding his cattle with root crops. This will necessitate tillage and labour. Increased tillage would mean labourers employed all the year round, probably at better pay, and it would mean a check upon emigration. The Department is making experiments with the object of showing farmers that winter-dairying would pay, and the Agricultural Organisation Society are interesting their groups of the co-operators in the subject. So far, the farmers and labourers have not wakened up to the possibilities.

IV. The Reconstruction of Rural Life

A rise in foreign competition and an increase in the cost of living; an absence of tillage, a lack of skill and method with farmer and with labourer; an enormous charge against the country on account of land purchase and the labour settlement: a student of Irish affairs might express a dread of bankruptcy when he considers these. But there are factors making for solvency and economic progress. To begin with, the purchase of the holding has a moral effect upon the people. A man owns a property

that he can pass on to his son and his grandson, and the tendency of human nature is to improve such. The struggle against the dual ownership of the land is over, the people have attained a great sobriety. The arrival of peasant proprietorship has found the country equipped with two valuable agencies for the improvement of rural business; the first of these is a State department, the Department of Agricultural and Technical Instruction, the second is a voluntary association—the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.

In August 1896, there was handed to Mr Gerald Balfour, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, a document called the Report of the Recess Committee. An accompanying letter informed the chief that the Recess Committee had its origin in an invitation which Mr Horace Plunket had issued the year before to a number of members of Parliament and other Irishmen of various political opinions, to meet for the discussion of any measure for the good of Ireland, upon which all parties might be found in agreement. The Committee recommended that a government Department should be created to foster agriculture, and that the branches of agriculture, industries, and technical instruction should be under the care of this Department. The constitution of the proposed Department, was laid down in the document presented. This Report of the Recess Committee was accepted by Mr Gerald Balfour as the basis of the legislation which he added to his other important measure, the Local Government Act of 1898. The deliberation of the Committee is now established in

the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. It is the only department in Ireland that contains an element of popular control.

The problem before the newly-established department was indicated in the opening of the Recess Committee's Report.[1] Ireland is dependent on agriculture, but its soil is imperfectly tilled, the area under cultivation is decreasing, and the diminishing population is without industrial habits or technical skill. Before the days of steam, Ireland was a rival of Great Britain in commerce and in manufacture. Through hostile legislation, Great Britain struck at all her industries not excepting agriculture. The population was forced into entire dependence on the land and the country was reduced to an economic condition involving periodic famines. The more energetic elements of the population were driven to emigrate, carrying their skill to foreign countries and of those who remained behind, the larger portion were subjected to the bad influences of the penal laws. "It is impossible to believe," says the Report, "that bad as our present situation is, both in industrial habits and industrial wealth, it is not worse than might have been produced in any country by such legislation as that to which we refer."

The Department is now in being for about fourteen years. It influences the farmer directly through the County Councils. They raise a rate in aid of Agriculture and Technical instruction, and employ instructors recommended by the Department. The

[1] A new edition has been issued. (Dublin: Brown & Nolan; London: T. Fisher Unwin). The Report of the Recess Committee has not merely an historical interest. It remains a valuable work on the resources of Ireland.

instructors lecture on agriculture, horticulture, poultry-raising; they visit farms and talk with the farmers. Ireland has now a well-organised system of rural instruction.

What is the attitude of the farmers to the instructors sent into their parish? They resent their coming because rates had been raised to pay salaries to the lecturers. But their first unpopularity has passed away and the instruction given is beginning to have effect. The farmers are beginning to amend their methods. Potatoes are sprayed and fields are top-dressed with more thoroughness. Better manures are being used. The farmers, young and old are becoming more alert to ideas.

Going through the Midlands, one notes that the best cultivation is before the new labourer's cottage, or on the holding occupied by a retired policeman, postman or schoolmaster. These people have come to agriculture with fresh interest: they are out of the old rut. The work of the Department will enable the farmers of Ireland to re-discover agriculture. Behind the County Council's schemes is a fine organisation and the new and splendidly equipped College of Science in Dublin. In each province there is a school of agriculture to which farmers can send their sons: the fee charged is proportionate to the valuation of his holding. When young men trained in these schools begin to apply their knowledge and their methods at home, the farming in the district will be greatly improved. But as yet the farmer's sons have not taken full advantage of the training offered them in such schools.

THE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, BALLYHAISE, CO. CAVAN,
(From a photograph.)

The creation of a social order of rural Ireland—that is the design apparent in the work of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. "A social order should provide for three things," says the prophet of the organisation movement, Mr George Russell, "for economic development, for political stability, for a desirable social life."[1] In rural Ireland there has been no social order, since the clan system with its sentiments of loyalty and kindness, its realities of service and protection was destroyed.

The nucleus of the new order is a group of farmers co-operating for a creamery or a rural Bank, for the sale of eggs or the preparation of flax. Through the energy of Father K—— a co-operative creamery has just been established in our parish. The capital for the machinery, the building, etc., was subscribed in the district. It was inevitable that a couple of farmer-shopkeepers should take over a good deal of the management. They subscribed a large portion of the capital and they have what the farmers lack, a business training, a familiarity with accounts. But their immediate interest is not in the development of the full co-operative idea, and I am not surprised to learn that, for the present, there is not to be an egg-centre in connection with the creamery, and that the co-operative group is not to become a medium for the direct purchase of seeds, machinery and manures. However, as the co-operative centre develops these restrictions must be broken down.

The establishment for creamery has noticeable effects on the people of a district. I will try to

[1] "Co-operation and Nationality," by Geo. W. Russell. Dublin: Maunsel & Co.

state some of them from the point of view of the small farmer, of the man with two or three cows. As I have said already, the peasant is by habit badly nourished; milk and butter are the staple provisions of his house. When the man with two or three cows sends to the creamery, he has only Saturday night's and Sunday's milk. This is not sufficient for the household, and the children come short of their nourishment. With four or five cattle, the milk of Saturday night and Sunday would give a churning after the creamery had been supplied. The profits from co-operation may enable him to add to his stock, and the organisation movement may bring him into the very profitable business of dairying all the year round. The connection with the creamery has a moral effect on the small farmer's house —it entails a strict discipline and cleanliness, and it produces sure returns at the end of each dairying month. These things tend to make the farm-house a business place. The richer farmer gets a more ample return: the economy of his household is not disturbed by sending out the milk; he gets a good price, and as he also gets his share in the profits of the creamery, the development of the co-operative society gives him opportunities for good investments, and his connection with the business side of it fits him to deal with public affairs. The labourer gets nothing out of the co-operative movement as applied to dairying; indeed he is at a loss by it, as the butter and milk which he used to get as payment in kind from the farmers, is now diminished. But the development of the co-operative idea may produce co-operative grazing, and this would be a great

THE NEW COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, DUBLIN.
(From a photograph.)

boon to the labourers. As to the farmer-shop-keepers, their connection with the co-operative movement is important, and I will dwell upon it in another page.

So far, the co-operative society as it affects individuals. As the group gains capital and experience, the society extends its operations. A Rural Bank is formed, cheese-making goes with butter-making, the society takes up the collection and the sale of eggs, it purchases directly, manure, seeds and machinery for its members, and it soon has sufficient funds to build a village hall. And now a bond holds the people together—the very real bond of economic interest; the community as a whole becomes eager about the development of its resources and a good administration of its business; the man that sends poor milk to the creamery, and the man who will not mind his affairs sufficiently well to pay off the instalment due at the Rural Bank, soon find that public opinion is against them. The district societies link themselves into federation for purchase and sale, and through these the farmers are able to act on the markets. About a hundred thousand country people are members of the co-operative societies, and their trade turn-over this year will be about three million pounds.

"In a few years' time," says Mr Russell, "instead of the dislocation and separation of interests which have been so disastrous in its effects, instead of innumeral petty businesses all striving for their own rather than for the general welfare, there will be in each parish one large association able to pay well for expert management, with complete control over

all processes of purchase, manufacture and sale." There are powerful interests ready to oppose this design. The Irish country traders do not deal merely in tea, bacon, meal, flour and porter; they sell manures, seeds, farm implements; they lend money, and they barter goods for eggs and butter. The small farmers of Ireland are, in a phrase they would use themselves, " drowned in debt " to them. The farmers never know how much they really owe the traders, and to be told that they have been charged £3 per ton for manure worth 6s. per ton, does not startle them into revolt. The trader in a country district has great influence. He controls large capital, he owns farms, he is on the district council, and the county council, on the committee of the co-operative society, he is prominent in the local branch of the United Irish League, he is patron to many clients. As members of the District and County Councils, the traders have a strong representation on the Council of Agriculture. This year there was question of a sum of money being made over to the Irish Agricultural Society from the Development Commissioners. But the Council of Agriculture advised the Vice-President of the Department (Mr T. W. Russell) not to support the application of the Agricultural Organisation Society. The traders of Ireland had sufficient political influence to make the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture declare for " non-controversal co-operation," that is co-operation that will not hinder the trader from selling seeds and manures to his dependents, the small farmers.

What it never had, it never lost, and the failure

of the Agricultural Organisation Society to obtain funds for the promotion of agricultural co-operation will not injure its work. But distinctly it is a bad thing for the country there should be rivalry between a great State Department and an important voluntary association. The Irish parliamentary party nominally represents the agrarian interest, but it really represents the trading interest; it is the traders who select the candidates and subscribe to the party funds. In the crisis they were able to use the machinery of the party against the Organisation Society. As the farmers of Ireland find their interest more and more bound up with the co-operative idea, they will be forced to exact pledges for the local council or for the national legislature, or else will have to create a party representing definitely the agricultural interest; this will have political consequences. In an Irish legislature, the democratic party will be divided by this.

Immediate self-interest hardens the country trader against agricultural co-operation. A wider view, however, would show him that his interests are bound up with the interests of a prospering community. In a well organised district, the country trader would not lend money or sell manures or seeds, but he would be a member of a society that would have many ways of turning profits. His knowledge and his training would give him a position, and a development of the district resources would permit a good investment for the idle money which the country shopkeeper generally has by him.

Ireland, when she strives from her own will, shows a remarkable tendency to return to national in-

stitutions. The temporary expedient of boycotting, for instance, reproduced the ultimate punishment in Gaelic law, the interdict which left a persistent offender a prisoner at large. The land struggle came from an economic necessity, no doubt, but behind the struggle, making it revolutionary, there was the memory of the Gaelic law that refused to recognise the possibility of lordship in the land. The design for a social order in Ireland is hopeful, because in co-operation it reproduces another typical institution. A district organised for the building up of a livelihood and a culture, restores the communal life of Gaelic times, and the co-operative organisations, linking themselves on to larger federation, are the old clan system stated in economic terms. The co-operative movement has been successful in Ireland because there were memories, characteristics and traditions, that made it intelligible to the people. Mutual aid in our time was a factor in the economic life of the Irish cottage, and a house wanting a particular piece of work done could get scores of hands from the neighbours. Such a party is called "*Meitheal*" ("mahil"). In our part of the country the tradition of mutual aid survives in the mahils for out of door work, turf-cutting generally.

V. Emigration

This is a country of small farms. There are many holdings of fifty acres and above it, and there are several grazing ranches of some hundreds of acres each, but the fifteen to twenty acres farm is repre-

sentative, and the household existing upon it is the typical household.

In such a household there are, say, five children—three sons and two daughters or three daughters and two sons. For the purpose of illustration I will take the case of a farmer with three sons and two daughters. Let us call them, Pat, Michael, John, Mary, and Bridget.

Pat is heir apparent to the farm, and his future is secure. Mary is the eldest girl and is entitled to a dowry of about £100. The father will provide this by saving part and by borrowing part on the security of the farm. Mary with her dowry gets a husband. Pat and Mary are thus provided for.

Three children are left—Michael, John, and Bridget. Michael's share of the farm when he comes to man's estate will be a £10 note, for Pat cannot afford any more. Pat will marry a girl with a dowry, but part of her dowry must go to paying off the debt on the farm and giving Michael his share. As he cannot have the farm nor money to buy a farm, Michael must try to get a "position"; in order to get a "position" he must have education, and the education is given him that he may become (1) A priest on the foreign mission; (2) a national school teacher; (3) a constabulary man; (4) a shop assistant in the town. One of these careers an Irish farmer always designs for his second son. He would not dream of making him a tradesman, mainly for the reason that a tradesman is not "genteel." So Michael gets his education and his £10 note and becomes a constabulary man, or a shop assistant, or drifts out of the country.

John and Bridget are left. Bridget has no dowry,

therefore cannot get a husband, and John cannot get a wife with a dowry, and therefore cannot get a farm. He could become an agricultural labourer, get a cottage, a wife, though a dowerless one, and live comfortably at home. But John will not become a labourer. He would at once feel de-classed. His family would be mortified if he became a labourer, and married a labourer's daughter. A farmer's son become an agricultural labourer—never. His people are raising the price of a passage for him, and one fine day John will go off to America with a score of boys and girls from the district.

Bridget goes first. She could get a labourer for her husband, but if she married one, she would be de-classed. She may not marry a farmer's son without a dowry. For Bridget, the price of a passage to America is scraped up, and she goes off to become a domestic servant and earn a dowry. When she earns her dowry she will come back and marry a farmer or a farmer's son.

It is part of Bridget's business in America to watch out for a situation for John. In time she sends for him, generally contributing the passage money. John goes out to earn a farm as Bridget went out to earn a dowry. Do they succeed? Of twenty Bridgets that go out to earn dowries three return with the dowry, marry and settle down. Seventeen are lost to Ireland. Half of them are never heard of again—some not even heard of by their parents. The others live and die domestic servants in America or get husbands there. In the first years of their exile they may pay a visit to the old people dressed in the fine garments of America, and making the stay-at-home

girls envious of the good times they are supposed to have. But for all their flaunting and boasting of the wonders of America they would be glad of marriage and a home in their own country. The dowry is not earned, or earned only when America has left its mark on them, and turned them, fresh young Irish girls, to withered women of thirty. Even the dowry then ceases to avail; the young men pass them by.

Out of twenty Johns that go out two come back to buy farms. Of the other eighteen some go under wholly and they are never heard of—others pick up a living by slaving twice as hard as an agricultural labourer in Ireland. Of the two who come back to buy farms, one is successful, he settles down. The other is not successful. He cannot get the land. The farmer-shopkeeper has been adding farm to farm, and now he will not break up his grazing land. Those who read the Unionist papers have an idea that cattle driving is connected with a desire to make a man give up his land for nothing. But the hazel stick is a desperate remedy for a great evil. The rancher won't sell his land at any price, and a grazing ranch must be broken up into small farms if the people are to live in the country. The second man who returned from America cannot buy a farm in Ireland. He goes back to the States and lives and dies there.

Out of forty young men and women who leave this county thirty-eight swear at the railway stations that they are coming back. They are in earnest. One man and three women return. Thirty-six don't.

This is emigration in the main stream. Add to it those who leave the country, not from any economic necessity, but because of the lack of life in their

district. When a cross-roads dance ceases, when a branch of the Gaelic League closes down, or when a Gaelic football or hockey team is disbanded, emigration rises in a parish. Let us remember, too, that in an Irish peasant household the parental authority is absolutely Roman. Young men and young women are denied, not merely hire for their service, but the right of choosing a wife or a husband for themselves. A good deal of emigration is due to a revolt against this household tyranny.

Amongst the people of the Gaelic stock the family, not the individual, is the unit that is considered. "One child should rear another," is a saying current in many Irish houses. Even when they are abroad the children of peasant households do not forget their obligation to their family. Part of their earnings is regularly sent home, and a place is sought for a brother or sister. The Irish never go back to the land in America; they remain in the cities where they create the same sort of social organisation as they had at home. They make a clan. Emigrants from particular districts in Ireland go to particular cities in America. The West of Ireland peasants go to Boston, the peasants of the Midlands to Pittsburg, the peasants of the South to New York. There is emigration to South America from particular parts of Longford, Meath and Westmeath, and I have been told that there is a village in Westmeath where Spanish is spoken in the street.

Irish emigration is exaggerated by the attraction of kinship. The great pull to America comes from the thousands of Irish girls in domestic service in the States. Practically the whole of the domestic service

of America is open to girl-emigrants from Ireland. They receive good wages, and they have access to the social life that is to their minds. Bridget goes to an American city where her native parish in County Roscommon is well-represented. She becomes a domestic servant. She also becomes a member of the County Roscommon Ladies' Association. When she attends the ball given by the Association, Miss Maloney's dress is described in an Irish-American newspaper, and this description read at home gives her sisters and girl comrades a sense of splendid life. Bridget can save, send money home, and supply prepared passages. She can take her holidays in Ireland, and wear dresses that give her distinction. The dresses that she leaves behind are a constant reminder of the dignities of American life.

Her brother John would not emigrate if he had not been taught that to work for another farmer was somehow degrading. And Bridget herself would not emigrate if she had a dowry. To keep John and Bridget in Ireland, we have to reform the ideas of one, and show the other how to get a dowry. This is really our main emigration problem. John's case can only be met by the reconstruction, materially and intellectually, of rural life in Ireland. Bridget's case might be met by some system of insurance that would allow a girl to obtain thirty or fifty pounds when she came to the age of twenty. The prepared passage is sent into Ireland, in many cases, not because the persons across the water believe that America provides a good environment, but because they think there is no other way of giving a brother or a relative a start in life. If the passage money went to apprenticing

the youth to some trade, it would be better for those in Ireland and those in America. Some time the Irish people may think it worth their while to create a national fund into which would be paid the monies that are now spent in pre-paid passages. The fund might be used to provide boys and girls with a training that would enable them to make a livelihood in Ireland.

American Letters

"No one ever sent a good story out of Ireland," said a returned emigrant-girl to me. The letters written from Ireland are conventional, superficial, and hard. They always make it apparent that the person written to has money and the person writing needs some of it. Here is a letter as written by the amanuensis of a peasant family. It is the type of the Irish letter to the States :—

My dear Anne,—I hope you are well as this leaves us at present. We are well, thank God, tho' this year has been a hard one on the poor farmers. It rained so hard we couldn't get the hay half saved. The turf isn't half home. We have the rent made nearly all up except two pounds or three. We hope you are not sick or anything that you didn't write home for two months. Dear Anne, don't be working too hard, and try and keep yourself well. John Burns' daughter came home from Chicago a week ago, you wouldn't know her, she that was the fine fresh rosy cheeked girl. She's got very thin, and her face is as yellow as a duck's foot. They say she has £150 saved. And she'll settle down if she can get a nice place to go into. She says that John O'Hara's daughter, Mary, that they be boasting about having made a great match out there, saying her man has her hung down with jewellery and pearls, married a black nigger man

that keeps a saloon. Sara Burns bought her father a side car and they have the rent paid. It's the first time we were behind the rent for a long time—so, dear Anne, if you can see your way to sending us a pound or two to put us over the half-year without stinting yourself, it will save your father a lot of trouble. He doesn't know that I'm making this request, but he has not put a bit of meat across his mouth for three months, for we couldn't afford it.

We heard last Sunday from the men coming from the Chapel that the Parliament is going to make the landlord give the people the land entirely, and we'll have to pay no more rent. Dear Anne, if this is the truth, we'll ask no more money of you, and you can keep it all up for your own future. Do you think will you come home this spring? We do be longing to see your face again, and we pray for you every night.

This letter was written for us by a grand daughter of Michael Fannigan's—Maria Cunroy's eldest child. Send her a silk handkerchief for Xmas. Good-bye, dear Anne, and God bless you. Your true and affectionate MOTHER.

The other letter is from America. We may imagine that Anne has written it to a girl comrade :—

Well Alice I do often be mad with myself for coming to this country. Some how I aint contented nor dont think I ever will untill I take a trip home. All the same I would not live over their now for anything. I have a very nice time Alice lots of money nice Clothes & having a good time. Alice We do have fun out here alright. I only wish you were out here. One thing you are just loosing your time over their if you have to work a little hard itself you get good money for your time. If you ever care to come write to me & I will send you what you know. I am thinking about getting married when I come back in Oct next. If I dont get Married in Oct I will go to Ireland the summer after. I guess I have enough said on the subject Alice we were at a great Ball last night going to another one tuesday night Alice their is were you would see style Balls dresses. it was fine & to see the yanky *fellows* in style. I wore a blue silk dress blue ribbon on my hair black velvet button high shoes my

sister Maggie wore the same Annie was not in it As she is living in the city Alice she looks fine & us three is going to get our Pictures taken We will send you one. Maggie is talking about going to Ireland in the summer I dont know for sure. How is Mollie getting along ye like the ring I sent Poor Mollie I often think of her I sent her the ring the way she would have something belonging to me. I suppose everything is just the same around the house. I will close for want of paper.

Well Alice I am got a real Yanky everone says it I changed greatly all for the better thank God I look fine.

CHAPTER III

LETTER TO AN IRISH FARMER

My dear Michael,—Many people have a bad impression of your class. They think of the farmers of Ireland as people who are anxious to take much and reluctant to give anything. They think of them as ill-adapted to the struggle for an independent existence. They have the impression that the farmers are too fond of the poor mouth. I have found the farmers of Ireland a hard-working, cheerful, self-respecting body of men. They have one great lack—they look upon themselves as people who are badly-placed. "Look upon us," they say, "striving from daylight to dark. In a town you might have a nice situation and you need never dirty your hands." When I was meditating on this letter I walked round to see yourself and family, and found you, your wife, and your two sons shaking hay in your field. 'Twas a beautiful day, Michael, and your occupation was as exhilarating as a bicycle ride or a game of hurling. The younger members of your family made no pretence—they thoroughly enjoyed the work. Anon came the little girl. We sat down on the ditch and had tea and pan-cakes. You returned to your grievance. A farmer's was an unsheltered, unremunerated life. You considered poor little Francis who was tossing the hay, and you thought you would make an effort to take him out

of such an existence. You would get a situation for the boy. He would have a clean house, a nice time, and need never dirty his hands. You thought a hundred a year would be an extraordinarily fine income. You did not know what your own income was, but you were sure it was not nearly a hundred per year—" no, nor the half of a hundred." Thereupon I took out a pencil and made this sum in addition :—

For pigs	£60 0 0
Calves	12 0 0
Milk (from creamery 30s. per month for 6 months) . .	9 0 0
Eggs (100 per week for 7 months)	11 4 0
Poultry (6 flocks, 30 chickens)	2 5 0
Turkeys	3 10 0
Geese	1 10 0
A young horse . . .	5 0 0
	£104 9 0

So you have the hundred per year, Michael. Now you have practically no rent to pay—£7 for a house and over twenty acres of land, good and bad. The only provisions you buy are flour and bacon. Now take the case of the clerical person in Dublin whose state you envy. The rent of his bare house is not less than £20 per annum. He has to pay 8d. per stone for potatoes (you never boil less than four stone of potatoes). For cabbage that would not go with the dinner of one member of your family he has to pay 2d. or 3d. You do not know what

it is to pay for milk by the week. You do not buy butter at 10d. or 1s. per lb. You need never buy eggs. Potatoes and cabbage, butter, eggs and milk; the staple of provision—you have them for nothing. You are free of rent, that burthen of the artisan, the clerical, and the professional classes in Dublin. You pay 9d. per lb. for bacon it is true, but if you really knew your own interest you would kill your pig and have pork all the year round. You buy flour, but you could grow half an acre of wheat, get it ground, and have again that strong and wholesome wheaten bread that we ate in our county a few years ago. Now, Michael, there is my calculation. If your children at school were taught a simple system of farm accounts you might feel a more independent man. And, believe me, Michael, that sense of independence is worth something.

When you think of the man "in the situation," the "clean-handed man," I suppose your mind is on the clerk. Now let me contrast your position with his. Ill, well, or indifferent, he has to be at his business at a certain hour in the morning. He has not the content of knowing that his labour is fruitful for himself. No green or golden crop compensates his weariness. Take up the difference between his labour and yours, Michael—shut in from the air, the sunshine, and the good hours he labours at some tedious account or watches the hands of the office clock. He cannot stand away from his work and talk with the passer-by. He cannot break the tedium of the day by a meal with his wife and children.

In every man there is a need for sunshine and variety of labour. The blue sky, the procession of

clouds, the flowering bushes, the rich-smelling earth, is part of the health of man. Part of the health of the animal I may say, for you know, Michael, the horse that can look over the stable door and notice the passing things is healthier and more spirited than the horse shut up. You, Michael, have the smell of the bushes in the morning, the sight of the wide sky at night, and these things are something to you. Think of the little clerk shut up in the bank and then think of a day in the meadow when the body swings with the scythe, when one feels the strong tear of the grass, when the young fellows are talking and laughing around us, and the silent hawk hangs above. Then, Michael, we feel that we are men, and we are indeed on the top of the world.

No, Michael, do not put young Francis into a situation. No, nor do not bend yourself to make a priest of him either. Priests are not to be made out of any casual member of the family. There is such a thing as a call to the priesthood. When the call is heard it will be time enough to discuss the possibility. We must have another piety, Michael. It should be pious for a man to have his farm in such order that it is a credit to himself, his family, and his country. It should be pious for a man to contrive so that his family is not scattered on the ways of the world. It should be pious for the sons to remain near the father, and the daughters near the mother. It should be a piety to know what is the nation, to make your labour and your family of service to the nation. Do you think of the clean and easy situation for Francis. It would be better for him,

I think, to be a labourer here in his own district. A labourer, you say, "Never, while the beam of my roof holds." Very well. But a man could do well with a good house, an acre of ground, and the employment he could get about here. We begin to understand co-operation, Michael. It would be possible for an association of labourers to graze cattle and rear a few calves to sell with their pigs, and to have some dealing with the co-operative banks. And with good and intelligent labourers in the district, the landed men like yourself would be in a position to develop your farms. I assure you, you do not get a quarter of its value out of your land. For one thing, with intelligent labour in the district, you could have winter dairying. You could feed your cattle on root crops, and send milk to the creamery for the other six months of the year. At that time you would get more than 30s. per month for milk. You do not approve of farmers' sons becoming labourers. Does your wife approve of it? I think the women approve. "Yes," said a woman to me, "if the boys would settle here, the girls would stay here too." You and your family of strong boys are practically idle in the winter. You have a creamery in your district, and it would be to everyone's advantage if milk could be supplied to it in the winter. Many farmers I know are thinking of winter dairying. Think it over and talk it over, it will soon become possible.

Michael; the whole of this country is depending on the labour of the man who has the land. The shopkeepers in the town, and the bank clerks behind the counter are dependants of yours. So are the

Constabulary men, and the fellows in the big offices. Do not think of farming as a rude occupation, fit only for thick-necked boors. More than any other occupation, yours demands an all-round intelligence and an all-round training. I will give you a word to remember, Michael. That word is Science. This year you have sprayed your potatoes and have sprayed them thoroughly. You are putting lime in your fields and basic slag in your meadows. You are using fertilisers. What is behind these things is well worth understanding. The man who understands them is a more intelligent man than your bank clerk or your District Inspector. The farmer who does not understand them is only a day labourer on the fields. You are making use of the means of improvement which the Department of Agriculture is bringing to your door. Make use of the training which it offers. Let your sons get some of this training. Here is young Francis with his fine head and intelligent eyes. Instead of letting the boy's mind run to America, instead of encouraging him to hang on the passage his poor little sister will send him, let the lad go for a session to the Agricultural College at Ballyhaise.

Our ideas are changing, Michael, and in the new arrangement of opinion questions may be asked you. Are you really a good farmer, Michael? Are the boys in your house farmers in the making? Can your girl cook a fowl or make a dish to go with your bacon? Is your house a credit to the district? Are there any flowers in your front garden? Is there anything of adornment about your house? Do you know the names of even the commonest flowers? Do you

know of any other vegetable beside cabbage? Do you know anything of fruit? In other parts of the world the farmer can sit down in his dining-room to a dinner of more than one course. A wash-room or bath-room is part of his house.

On the way from your house I passed a place where there were larch trees. The place has been sold to the tenants. You and some others have cut down the trees and left the ugly stumps in the ground. That act, Michael, was a sin against the beauty and health of your district.

I blame you for such acts, and I blame you and your class for the constant litigation that disgraces the country. Meanwhile remember that you farmers are the body and bones of the Irish nation. Stick to the work. Contrive ways of improving your holding. Keep your children about you. Become prosperous, independent, and proud.

CHAPTER IV

SURVIVING MYTH AND CUSTOM

ATHLONE,
Monday, February 19th.

Because he was "afraid of the fairies" an agricultural labourer named Kilduff threw up an acre of land which he had secured under the Labourers' Act and upon which the Athlone District Council proposed to build a cottage for him. The plot is at Lacken, made memorable by Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," as containing the pool "the noisy geese" gabbled over, and on the lands of Mr Adamson, whose family held this famous spot in the poet's days. Kilduff's objection to the plot was that there was a "fort" on it which would have to be removed for his cottage, and "on no account would he interfere with the fairies' home," which, they knew, "one never had any luck after." At the meeting of the District Council last Saturday, Patrick Gilleran, ex-district councillor, applied for the plot upon which he intended to build a cottage.

Mr Buckley. It is not a place to site a cottage on in the first place.

Mr Smyth, J.P. Gilleran does not appear to be afraid of the fairies.

Mr Tracey. He is going to enclose the fort.

Mr Rourke. Build a wall around it?

Mr Tracey. Yes.

Mr Rourke. Undoubtedly many people do not like to interfere with these old places.

Mr Smyth. Kilduff gave it up because he did not like to interfere with the "fort." There are a great many people who do not like to cut them down.

Mr Malone. And at the inquiry he swore that this house was so windy that a wild duck would get rheumatism in it.

It was decided to give Gilleran the plot on his signing a bond

FAIRY PICTURE—THE HORN BLOWERS.

to pay the rent until such time as the District Council built a cottage there (*Evening Telegraph*, Dublin, February 19th, 1912).

A "fort" or "rath" is an earthern fortification generally crowned by some old trees. The people say that the Danes built these forts, but I believe that the "Danes" in the English-speaking parts of the country stand for the De Dannans, who are the gods of the Irish Celts. The palaces of the fairies are thought to be under these forts, and in Oliver Goldsmith's country the man who would interfere with a fort is certainly one in a thousand. . . . "What are the fairies," I asked a blind wanderer I met upon the road. I can still see his face filled with intensity of conviction. "The fairies," he said; 'I will tell you what the fairies are. God moved from His seat, and when he turned round Lucifer was in it. Then Hell was made in a minute. God moved His hand and swept away thousands of angels. And it was in His mind to sweep away thousands more. 'O God Almighty, stop!' said the angel Gabriel, 'Heaven will be swept clean out.' 'I'll stop,' said God Almighty; 'Them that are in Heaven, let them remain in Heaven, them that are in Hell, let them remain in Hell, and them that are between Heaven and Hell let them remain in the air. And the angels that remained between Heaven and Hell are the Fairies.'" What he said was as true to the man as one of the Gospels. For those who have kept in touch with the Gaelic traditions it is necessary to create a mighty origin for the fairies, or, as they are called in Irish tradition the Sidhe.[1] "Pease-blossom" and "Mustard-seed" are not

[1] Pronounced Shee.

amongst the Irish Sidhe, whose names are the names of kings and queens. In parts of the country the Sidhe are diminished, but in other parts it is not forgotten that they are representative of great powers and dominions. They are the old gods of the Celts. The attitude of the people towards them is expressed in the charm that is uttered in Arran :—

> " We accept their protection,
> And we refuse their removal;
> Their backs to us,
> Their faces from us,
> Thro' the death and passion
> Of Our Saviour Jesus Christ." [1]

The part of the country where the Athlone District Council have authority is sophisticated enough, but even there the fairies are spoken of with respect. They are " The Good People," and it is wise to say little about them. It is remembered that sometimes they take away children, and sometimes newly-married brides. They delight in music, and often they carry off a good fiddler or piper to attend them in their revels under the rath. Music is communicated between fairies and mortals. The lovely dance tune known as the " Fairy Reel " is believed to have come straight out of the fairy world. On the other hand, it is known that mortal musicians have added to the fairy stock of tunes. I should say that in Oliver Goldsmith's county, that the only members of the fairy company individualised are the Leprechaun and the Banshee. The Leprechaun is only an artisan for the fairies. But he knows where

[1] Taken down by Eoin MacNeil, and given in " The Religious Songs of Connacht."

the crocks of gold are hidden. He is a very little fellow, and he is always engaged in his trade of shoemaking. If you are near a rath or an old castle you may hear the sound of his hammering. If you discover the fellow, draw close to him, without making a sound that would betray you. If you are lucky you may be able to take him in your grasp. Then ask him where those crocks of gold are hidden. Insist upon his telling you, and do not let your mind be dissipated by his excuses. But in the end he will cheat you. He will say or do something that will distract your attention, and when you look again the Leprechaun will have disappeared.

The Banshee is a tragic invention. She stays near a house and wails for the one who is about to die. Those who know how piercing it is to hear one "weep Irish" will realise what a terrible visitant the Banshee would be. In all respects this lone woman is like the "Keener" or mourner for the actual dead. Those who have looked upon her describe her as drawing a comb through her hair. She is probably tearing out her hair in the manner of the old mourners. The Banshee follows only the families of the "high Milisian race," that is the people who are entitled to have an "O" or a "Mac" before their names. And she only wails for those who are descendants of noble families. Many peasant families in Ireland can well claim noble descent, as practically all the native aristocracy who did not go over to France, Spain, or Austria were, in the phrase of a native historian, "Melted into the peasantry."

The trees that crown the rath and the "lone" thorn bushes that grow in the fields are the only

timber that have exemption in Ireland. The plough is never brought to the roots of the old bush, and the bill-hook is never turned against its branches. If a man cuts the bush in his field, misfortune will come upon his household. The privileges of the Church are not sufficient to protect one from the resentment of the beings who are connected with the bush. I have been told of a priest who had been given as a site for a chapel a piece on which a " lone " bush grew. He had it cut down. But he was never able to build his chapel upon that site, for the horses, drawing the materials, were stricken down when they came to the place where the bush had been. A student of folk-lore seeks a comrade for the spirit of the bush in the spirit of the well. I remember that in the story of the " Horned Witches," it is the spirit of the well tells the woman of the house how to baffle her evil visitors. There is little folk-lore, however, current about wells. The most renowned of them have now the secure sanctity of religion. Consecrated by the name of some saint they draw thousands of pilgrims. Very characteristic of Ireland is the sight of holy wells with devotees beside them. The scene, perhaps, is in some desolate place with bare mountains for a background. Two or three wells may be together. In rigid attitudes the pilgrims are kneeling on flags beside the wells with great rosaries hanging from their hands. On bushes near are hanging rags, sticks, crutches, scapulars and rosaries —the offerings of those who have experienced relief. People go to holy wells for cures for blindness, lameness, nervous troubles, or they make the pilgrimage because of some vow made to insure the safety of the

son or daughter abroad in England, Scotland, or America.

Some months ago I was at a *celidh* in the house of a well-off farmer. We were seated round the fire talking about American letters, old-age pensions, and the prospects of land purchase, when a bewildered child came amongst us. He was undressed and had come down from the bedroom, and it was evident that he was walking in his sleep. "What is the matter with you, John?" said one of the men present. "Hush," said his mother, "don't call him John, call him Owenie." The child's name was changed for the occasion, and until he was got back to bed, he was spoken of as "Owenie." The being before us was under an enigmatic power, and it would not be well to let that power have possession of an important thing—the child's real name. The attitude of the people showed a remembered custom, and the mystery then made helped me to realise an attitude often dwelt upon in folk-tales—notably in the one that narrates the death of Cuchulain—the necessity for withholding a person's real name.

When John had been got back to bed I turned the conversation to remembered beliefs and customs. Were the children still forbidden to rob the nests of swallows? Yes, for if the swallow's nest was robbed the cows would milk blood. The children were also forbidden to strike each other with a rod of the alder. Why? The people said it was because the Cross was made of alder wood. But this explanation shows that the myth about the alder wood had been forgotten. Probably the swallows' nests are respected because of a tradition that makes them sacred as the bringers-

in of summer. But apart from any tradition, the sight of a swallow on the ground is sufficient to inspire one with some dread ; for this dusky and savage little bird has the strangeness of something out of an unknown element. On seeing a wounded swallow the first feeling of an instructed person would be a wish to keep away from it.

II

Odd individuals are credited with weird powers. A friend of mine, who is a medical man, is interested in a belief which credits some peasant with the power of stopping bleeding by some spell, charm or occult influence. He tells of a valuable hunter that was injured in the open country in such a way as to cause excessive bleeding. Some peasants told the rider of the proximity of a man who could stop the bleeding. He was brought upon the scene. Everyone was turned away, and alone the man went through the ceremony. In a while the people were brought back ; the bleeding had been stayed. There is a remarkable and persistent tradition of horses being tamed by a spell whispered into their ear. The man who claims this power is called " The Whisperer." Part of the bargain that " The Whisperer " makes is that there shall be no witnesses to the operation. But Borrow, who refers to " The Whisperer " in two of his books, says nothing about the secrecy of the operation. When " Lavengro " was in Ireland as a youth he met one who had the power of " The Whisperer." The scene which he gives vividly is so appropriate to this

chapter that I will relate it in Borrow's words.[1] It was a smith in Tipperary who had mysterious power.

"Can you do this, agrah?" said the smith, and he uttered a word which I had never heard before, in a sharp, pungent tone. The effect on myself was somewhat extraordinary; a strange thrill ran through me; but with regard to the cob it was terrible; the animal forthwith became like one mad, and reared and kicked with the utmost desperation.

"Can you do that, agrah?" said the smith.

"What is it?" said I, retreating, "I never saw the horse so before."

"Go between his legs, agrah," said the smith, "his hinder legs"; and he again showed his fury.

"I dare not," said I, "he would kill me."

"He would kill ye? And how do you know that, agrah?"

"I feel he would," said I, "something tells me so."

"And it tells ye the truth, agrah; but it's a fine beast, and it is a pity to see him in such a state. *Is agam an't leigeas*";[2] and here he uttered another word in a voice singularly modified but sweet and almost plaintive. The effect of it was as instantaneous as that of the other, but how different. The animal lost all fury and became at once calm and gentle. The smith went up to it, coaxed and petted it, and made use of various sounds of equal endearment; then turning to me, and holding out once more his grimy hand, he said, "And now you'll be giving me the Sassenach tenpence, agrah."

I know an old man living in Dublin whose conscience is now really perturbed because he once made acknowledgment of unauthorised spiritual powers. He carried a charm from one crone to another. It appears that these charms are communicated not directly but through an intermediary, and this intermediary is a boy or girl too young to realise the significance of the words given them to repeat. The

[1] Lavengro.

[2] I have the cure.

spell is always in Irish. My friend performed the commission, and long afterwards he began to think of the words of the charm. One of the powers therein invoked was, "The king who would not obey." He knows that this occult phrase covers a reference to Lucifer. References to Lucifer or the pagan powers are not frequent in the charms still repeated in the Irish-speaking districts. These charms are mainly against disease, and the powers to whom appeal is made are generally orthodox. In "The Religious Songs of Connacht," Dr Hyde mentions that O'Flaherty gives fifteen charms that he heard amongst the people in Connemara: "A charm for staunching of blood, a charm for 'rose' or erysipelas, a charm against choking, two charms against a festering, a charm by which a mad dog is quelled, a charm against 'little fever' or neuralgia, a toothache charm, Mary's charm for women in child-bed, a charm said on going round with Brigit's Cross, a charm against want, Columcille's, or the hurting charm, the night-mare charm, the love charm, and a charm against the demons of the air." We imagine that the love charm would be the most valuable of these. No love charm is given in "The Religious Songs of Connacht"; but our readers can find a very beautiful one in Lady Wilde's fine book, "Ancient Legends of Ireland."

There are three festivals that commemorate ancient customs. The old festival of Samhain that is now synchronised with Hallow Eve, Saint Bridget's Day, which falls on the 2nd February, and St John's Eve, which falls on 21st June. It is dangerous to be abroad on Hallow's Eve, but the girl who has the courage to look into a well at midnight will see the image of

her future husband. If she has not the heart for this adventure she may learn his Christian name in this way; she takes the peel of an apple unbroken, and hangs it over the door of her house. The first man who enters will have her husband's name. On St John's Eve they light great bonfires, and the young people dance and sing round them. A generation ago the ceremony had more significance. The people drove the cattle through the fire, and afterwards scattered the ashes over their fields. I was speaking to a priest who remembered the survivial of this custom in Donegal. His father and his mother carried out the ancient ceremonies, but it was understood that the young people would not pay any heed to the observances. On St Bridget's Day they cut the rushes, out of which are woven the St Bridget crosses. The rushes were placed under the table and the feast was spread upon it. The servant girl had gone outside. Now she knocked at the door and the woman of the house cried out in Irish, "Welcome, Bridget," she knocked three times, and three times the woman welcomed her as Bridget. Then she entered and sat down to the feast. Afterwards the St Bridget crosses were made. These are rushes plaited into the form of a swastika. In the West of Ireland and in the North they hang on the walls from one St Bridget's Day to another. May Eve is remembered in parts of the country as a time sacred to the Other People. Bowls of flowers used to be left outside the houses on this occasion. On May Days, says the writer of an old account of Ireland, the people decked their houses with green boughs. This, says he, is from a fantastical conceit, for

people expect that their store of cattle will be thereby increased.

The fairy faith is gracious and imaginative, but it has also suggestions of a savage world. There have been odd cases in which persons suspected of being changelings have been cruelly treated. The creature thought to be impersonating the human child or the stolen woman is held over the fire. Ireland kept herself pure from the ferocious campaigns against witches that were inaugurated in the Puritan countries. But a belief in the possibility of witchcraft lingers amongst us. In Ireland witches are harmless enough; the whole object of their spells apparently is to get the good of their neighbours churning. They reap the dew off the grass on the morning of the 1st May, and this action, with certain spells uttered, gives them their power. Those against whom their spells are directed may churn and churn all day but no substance comes on their milk, for the butter is drawn to the witches' churn. In conformity with primitive belief, iron is potent against witches and fairies. The worker in iron also has some magical powers. St Patrick invoked the might of God against "the spells of women, and of smiths and of Druids," and to this day, in certain parts of the country, the smith has the power to work a most evil spell. He turns his anvil against the person maledicted, and calls on the power of the devil. Generally the smith can be induced to withdraw his spell.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION IN POPULAR POETRY

In the matter of a people's religion one need only be eager to know what is essential in it and what is characteristic. What is characteristic in the faith of the Irish peasantry can be distinguished without any profound intuition or observation, for they have expressed the religious side of their life in an abundant popular poetry, and the expression is now accessible to us in Dr Hyde's collection, "The Religious Songs of Connacht." These songs show a deep understanding of the sanctity of the things of the hearth, and a vivid realisation of the drama of the Passion. It is this realisation and this understanding give distinctiveness to the religion of the Irish Catholic peasantry. Dr Hyde took down this popular poetry from the people in the Irish speaking parts of the country; it is no longer current in the districts where English is now spoken. Nevertheless one can say that the contents of Dr Hyde's two volumes represents the religious feeling of the whole of Catholic Ireland.

For people in isolated cabins the pause of night is significant. At last the fire is "raked," the burning turf is covered with ashes that the seed of the fire may be preserved till the morning. The person who "rakes" the fire says:—

> "I save this seed of fire to-night,
> Even so may Christ save me;

On the top of the house let Mary,
In the middle let Bridget be.

Let eight of the mightiest angels,
Round the throne of the Trinity,
Protect this house and its people
Till the dawn of the day shall be."

The making of the bed is commemorated in another religious poem :—

" I make this bed
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
In the name of the night we were conceived,
In the name of the day we were baptised,
In the name of each night and each day,
Each angel that is in Heaven.
' What art thou saying, Mother ? '
' Another little prayer, *agra*.'
' Good is thy prayer to be said, O Mother.' "

There are many versions of the prayers to be said on lying down, and on rising in the morning. They are known from Arran and the West of Ireland, to Lochaber in Scotland. In all of them is poetry for in all the significance of life is realised. Sometimes a more ancient poetry is remembered as in this benediction said on milking a cow :—

" The blessing of Mary and the blessing of God,
The blessing of the Sun and the Moon on her road,
Of the Man in the East and the Man in the West,
And my blessing with Thee, and be thou blest."

The names most cherished in Irish Catholic households are the Blessed Virgin's and St Bridget's. In Ireland and Scotland where Gaelic is spoken, the name of Bridget is especially venerated. In Gaelic tradition she is the foster-mother of Christ. It is

possible that the saint has taken over some of the homage paid to the older Bridget of Pagan Ireland, who was patron of the poets, and whose name signifies "a fiery dart." The name of the Blessed Virgin is dwelt upon at all times. It is characteristic of Gaelic piety that there should be a distinction between the name of Mary as given to the Virgin, and the name Mary as given to a woman. "Mwire" is the sacred name, and "Maurya" the familiar name. Into the drama of the Passion the Irish people have projected their customs, their history and their temperament. The part of Mary the Mother has been the subject of intense meditation. The noblest poem in "The Religious Songs of Connacht" commemorates the Passion from Mary's side :—

"When the Virgin had heard Him
And His sorrowful saying
(Ochone agus ochone, O !),
She sprang past His keepers
To the three of His slaying
(Ochone agus ochone, O !).

'What fine man hangs there
In the dust and the smother?'
(Ochone agus ochone, O !)
'And do you not know Him?
He is your Son, O Mother!'
(Ochone agus ochone, O !)

They cast Him down from them
A mass of limbs bleeding
(Ochone agus ochone, O !).
'There now He is for you;
Now go to your keening'
(Ochone agus ochone, O !)."

"There go to your keening." The words may have been used by a deputy in Connacht or Munster as he threw down to the mourners some young man "a mass of limbs bleeding." It is related to the people's lives, this story of the Child born in hardship, betrayed in His manhood, mocked at and crucified. The present generation in Ireland experienced something of the long subjection of their race. And this sense of being dominated by a powerful and worldly class must have been stronger as the generations go back. Nevertheless, subjection has not created in their religious poetry that overpowering sense of pity that we expect to find in the memorials of another religious people—the Russians. In these religious songs the prevailing mood is kindliness. Fortunately for our meaning the word "kind" has also reference to blood relationships. These loved and venerated figures have been adopted into the Gaelic clan.

> "Remember those from whom you sprang.
> Strive earnestly on their behalf,"

cries David O'Bruadar in his poem to the Virgin. At the root of this religious poetry there is that which is at the root of the good manners of the Irish peasantry—a sense of equality that does not allow either condescension or servility. As the congregation leaves the chapel a man or woman will turn round and say in his homely speech: "Farewell, Christ, farewell, Mary. The apostles keep me till I come again."

Strangers in Ireland have been led to comment upon the fidelity with which the people fulfil the obligation of hearing Mass. In Dublin, on Sundays

A MADONNA OF THE WEST.
(From an oil painting by Beatrice Elvery in the possession of Mr. C. P. Curran.)

or on holidays, the churches are filled to the doors. But it is in country districts that one sees the typical Irish congregations. The gathering at the Chapel has some of the characteristics of a public assembly of which the priest is president. In an interval of the service he makes announcements of this or that meeting to be held outside the chapel after Mass. From the altar he speaks to the people of the necessity for spraying potatoes or hastening land purchase. The attitude of the people is naturally religious even though these secular affairs are glanced at. After Mass the people attend to the speaker from the Party, from the Agricultural Organisation Society, or from the Gaelic League. In well-living Catholic households private devotion is added to the public devotion of a Sunday. At night one may be going by a roadside cabin; there is a light in the window, and as one passes one hears the recital of prayer, the grave responses, the long recitation of a litany. Within a family are offering up a rosary. The attitude of the people is consistently devout. A woman with a shawl across her head is mounting a car. Because she is going on a journey, she makes the sign of the cross and bends her head for a moment.

Their religion has never made the people bigots or persecutors. Because they have religious connections, certain people are ready to think of them as "priest ridden." In "The Religious Songs of Connacht," there are pieces to show how well the Irish Catholics can detect and satirise worldliness or avarice in ministers of religion. They have intimations of a spiritual world, but these do not leave them "poisoned with piety." The religion of the Irish people is part

of their existence, and they live with it easily and gladly. The gaiety of their spiritual life is in this little song:—

"A fragrant prayer upon the air,
My child taught me.
Awake there, the morn is fair,
The birds sing free.
Now dawns the day, awake and pray,
And bend the knee.
The Lamb who lay beneath the clay,
Was slain for thee."

CHAPTER VI

SONGS, STORIES AND CONVERSATIONS

Sixty years ago the people of this part of the country were in possession of a medium along which was passed the song of yesterday, the poem made five hundred years ago, the story that has existed for a thousand years. They spoke the Irish language. The child who went to our first National school, left a house in which traditional poetry, songs and stories were known, with Ossianic lays and traditional Irish history. No wise and humane system of bilingual instruction was permitted in the schools. The child was forced to read a language he had never heard spoken, and a teacher was forbidden to enlighten his mind by an explanation in the language that was familiar to both. The Board of National Education was bent upon destroying the Irish language. And the people agreed to second the effort of the Board. At home it was almost a religious obligation not to let the child hear a word of Irish. The language was being attacked in the school and in the home. Then came the famine of 1846-7. The Ireland that survived that unimaginable disaster was like a person who had received a blow on the head. Memory was shattered.

I knew two men who were survivors from the period

before the famine. I remember that one was constantly making notes in Irish, and that he had manuscripts in his house. No one gave him any attention, and when he died his manuscripts were burned.[1] The other old man lived down to a time when I began to take any interest in the tradition by these strange elders. He must have been a scholar in his day, for the poetry in Irish which he liked to repeat was always some of MacHale's translations of Moore's Irish songs. He would also repeat passages from the Irish version of the "Iliad." My friend was satirised rather than respected by the peasants. I imagine that the first man had all the lore which Carleton tells us that his father possessed. "All kinds of charms, old ranns or poems, old prophecies, religious superstitions, tales of pilgrims, miracles and pilgrimages, anecdotes of blessed priests and friars, revelations from ghosts and fairies."

The people are lively minded and they are con-

[1] Sixty years ago quantities of manuscripts must have been extant in peasant houses. Doctor Hyde in his "Literary History of Ireland" tells how a friend of his, travelling in the Co. Clare, found children tearing three manuscripts to pieces. The manuscripts were sent to Dr Hyde. One of them was about one hundred years old, and contained a saga called "The Love of Dubhlacha for Mongan." M. d'Arbois de Joubainville had searched the libraries for this story, and Pr. Kuno Meyer and Mr Alfred Nutt considered it of the highest value as elucidating the psychology of the ancient Irish. Dr Hyde quotes a letter that he received from a peasant. "I could read many of the Irish Fenian (Ossianic) tales and poems that was in my father's manuscripts, he had a large collection of them. I was often sorry for letting them go to loss, for I could not copy the $\frac{1}{20}$th of them." Another peasant wrote: "About twenty years since I was able to tell two dozen of Ossians Irish poems and some of Rafterys' and more Rymes composed by others, but since then no one has asked me to tell one Irish story at a wake or by a fireside sine the old people died. Therefore when I had no practise I forgot all the stories I had."

tinuously making mental interest for themselves, but the person who comes amongst them seeking for traditional lore will be apt to think that their imaginative life is as flat as their natural landscape. The heroic romances and the folk romances have survived only in fragments and odd references. The poetry represented by the " Love Songs of Connacht " and " The Religious Songs of Connacht " have been lost in the change from the Irish to the English language. But the people are eager about songs and stories. Everybody except some odd anti-social beings wants to know songs, and the most acceptable present one could make to a country boy or girl is a book of songs that would not be unfamiliar. In every cottage there is a song-book, and the young men buy the ballads that are hawked about in broad sheets. One can hardly describe as traditional the songs known here; only a few come from former generations. Some have been learned from broad sheets, some have been brought back from England by harvesters, and some have been composed by known people. Of the songs which the people of the Midlands possess, the most interesting to my mind are those which show some Gaelic influence. The other day I took down a fragment of a song which has the Gaelic structure. The original was evidently popular about the transition period, and the person who translated it was familiar with the Irish and not familiar with the English forms of versification :—

" I'd spread my cloak for you, young lad,
If 'twas only the breadth of a farthen,
And if your mind was as good as your word,
In troth it's you I'd rather ;

In dread of any jealousy,
And before we go any farther,
Hoist me up to the top of the hill,
And show me Carricknabauna."

In Irish verse the rhyme is assonantal; that is, it consists in the agreement of vowel sounds; the vowels being strongly pronounced, there is abundance of such combinations as "bathe" and "lave," "thought" and "fault," "autumn" and "water." A whole poem is often rhymed on a single vowel sound. In this fragment the correspondences are in "*a*rthen," "r*a*ther," "f*a*rther." This suggests an attempt to rhyme the stanza on the broad "a" in "bauna." Possibly the whole of the original was rhymed on this sound. The Gaelic structure is completely achieved in a ballad which I have often heard sung on the roadway and by the fireside, "The Lament for Hugh Reynolds, who was hanged for stealing away a Young Lady." [1]

"My name it is Hugh Reynolds, I come of honest parents;
Near Cavan I was born as plainly you may see,
By loving of a maid, one Catherine MacCabe,
My life has been betrayed—she's a dear maid to me.

The country were bewailing my doleful situation,
But still I'd expectation this maid would set me free;
But oh! she was ungrateful, her parents proved deceitful,
And though I loved her faithful, she's a dear maid to me.

Young men and tender maidens, throughout the Irish nation,
Who hear my lamentations, I hope you'll pray for me;
The truth I will unfold, that my precious blood she sold.
In the grave I must lie cold—she's a dear maid to me.

[1] After the first stanza, instead of assonance, rhyme is used, but according to the Gaelic rule of interlinear correspondence.

For now my glass is run, and my hour it is come,
And I must die for love, and height of loyalty ;
I thought it was no harm, to embrace her in my arms,
And take her from her parents—she's a dear maid to me.

Adieu my loving father, adieu my tender mother,
Farewell my dearest brother, who has suffered sore for me ;
With irons I'm surrounded, in grief I lie confounded,
By perjury unbounded—she's a dear maid to me.

Now I can say no more, to the law-board I must go,
There to take the last farewell of my friends and countrie ;
May the angels shining bright, receive my soul this night,
And convey me into Heaven to the blessed Trinity."

In the traditional songs a distinctive rhythm is as evident as a distinctive structure. This distinctive rhythm is based upon Irish music. The other day I took down this fragment.

" When we lived together each other we did adore,
This green little island we wandered it o'er and o'er ;
We worked at our trade and our earnings we spent quite free,
But now you have left me, Mo Drahareen oge mo chree.[1]

And now I am left like a sorrowful bird of the night,
The earth and its pleasures no more can afford me delight ;
The dark narrow grave is the only sad refuge for me,
Since I lost my heart's darling, Mo Drahareen oge me chree." [2]

I heard it in the Midlands, but it must have been brought from the West. Its rhythm is identical with that of a version of an Irish poem given in the

[1] Dear young brother of my heart.

[2] Thomas Moore may be said to have brought Gaelic rhythms into English verse, and through Moore they have come into the verse of Shelley, Byron and Swinburne. But before Moore's day a Gaelic rhythm has occurred—it is in Lady Nairn's " Lament for Culloden." I do not know if the " Lament for Culloden " had a Gaelic original—it is probably written with the memory of Gaelic music.

"Oxford Book of English Verse," "The Outlaw of Lough Lene."

The people like a literary flavour in their songs. "No good ballads are made now," said a countryman to me; "sure, the people haven't the language." His own language was splendid, being vigorous and close to the sod, and this was his idea of poetic diction. In the song a lady is making a proposal of marriage to a country boy :—

> "Dear Willie, you'll roll in great splendour,
> With lords, dukes and earls of great fame,
> And you'll correspond with these nobles,
> And of course you will equal the same."

I remember that the song was sung to me by a Cavan fowl-buyer, as we both traversed the O'Reilly country in the fowl-buyer's van. This other song that he gave me was native to the spot :—

"It was near Southwell fair castle this young man was bred,
And his parents they reared him without fear or dread;
For good education none could him excel,
And his last declaration I am now going to tell.

It being a fair morning I heard people say,
To the sweet county Leitrim he straight took his way,
Where Humes, the bloody traitor with his armed band
Opposed valiant Reilly and caused him to stand.

Like Hercules, undaunted, he did them oppose,
But being far from his friends, in the midst of his foes,
And having no armour, no sword and no shield,
At length valiant Reilly was forced for to yield.

The groves of Killeshandra no more they'll be green,
Nor the warbling fine thrushes no more shall they sing,
And the trout in Lough Oughter no more they shall spawn,
Since the downfall of Reilly called Paddy Shan Baun."

That there is only one classical name in this song is a matter for surprise. Ballads of this kind are generally stuffed with such names as Telemachus, Polyphemus, Hector, Orpheus, Dido, Helen. The fashion must be over now, for the other day in a cottage I heard a delightful parody of the older ballads. I cannot find it now. Instead of it, I find in my collection of Midland songs a version of the Scots ballad "Edward." Not as poetry, but as a momento of the period of "Small swords" and "Free lands," and as a souvenir of an unsuspected literary commerce it is interesting.

"What blood is that on your small sword?
Come, son, pray tell it unto me.
That's the blood of my brother John,
And a fair lady.

What came between you and your brother John?
Come, son, pray tell it unto me.
About the cutting down of a pretty little twig,
That was growing to become a tree.

What will you do when your father comes home?
Come, son, pray tell it unto me.
I'll put my foot on yon ship board,
And sail from this country.

And what will you do with your pretty race mare?
Come, son, pray tell it unto me.
I'll take the saddle from off her back,
She'll race no more for me.

What will you do with your pretty pack of hounds?
Come, son, pray tell it unto me.
I'll take the collars from off their necks,
They'll hunt no more for me.

What will you do with your children three?
Come, son, pray tell it unto me.
I'll leave them with you, dearest Mother, he says,
To keep you company.

What will you do with your house and free lands?
Come, son, pray tell it unto me.
I'll leave them with you, dearest Mother, he says,
To maintain my children three.

What will you do with your pretty little wife?
Come, son, pray tell it unto me.
She'll put her foot on yon ship board,
And sail along with me."

The songs most characteristic of the Midlands are the political ballads which the people call "Secret songs" or "Treason songs." They are as full of obscure references as a symbolist poem. Indeed, their unfailing symbolism is their most noticeable characteristic. In the songs of every subject people there must be an enigmatic expression. But the obscurity of our political songs is due to another motive besides the practical one of concealing a hope or an intention; one perceives in them that bias which a French historian has detected in the Irish mediæval philosophers: "The Celtic partiality for the rare, the difficult, the esoteric: strange combinations of words and ideas; enigmas, acrostics, occult languages, cryptography." Here is a ballad which is typical of the older political songs. It was given to me by a peasant in the County Longford [1]:—

[1] I should say that the last verse was an interpolation. The song is older than O'Connell's epoch, for "the gardener" and "the huntsman" stand for the Jacobite deliverer who will come from across the water. There must have been an Irish original, because the term "deer" for the outlanders is palpably a translation of an opprobrious epithet which in Irish is applied to the stag.

"I planted a garden of the laurel so fine,
In hopes to preserve it for a true love of mine;
By some treason or storm the roots did decay,
And I'm left here forlorn by my darling's delay.

This garden's gone wild for the want of good seed;
There's nought growing in it but the outlandish weed,
Some nettles and briars and shrubs of each kind;
Search this garden all over, not a true plant you'll find.

In one of those gardens a violet doth spring,
'Tis preserved by a Goddess and wore by a King;
It blooms in all seasons, and 'tis hard to be seen;
There's none fit to wear it but a Prince or a Queen.

I'll send for a gardener to France or to Spain,
That will cultivate those gardens and sow the true grain,
That will banish those nettles and the wild weeds away;
Bring a total destruction on them night and day.

This garden's invaded this many a year,
By hundreds and thousands of the outlandish deer,
With their horns extending they are overgrown;
They thought to make Ireland for ever their own.

I'll send for a huntsman that soon will arrive,
With a stout pack of beagles to hunt and to drive
Over highlands and lowlands, through cold, frost and snow,
No shelter to shade them wherever they go.

Now to conclude and to finish my song,
May the Lord send some hero, and that before long;
May the Lord send some hero of fame and renown;
We'll send George to Hanover and O'Connell we'll crown."

"The oul' men who remembered the battle of Granard used to cry tears down when I used to sing them that song," said the man who gave it to me. I could well believe him. Such songs may not appeal to the practical will, but they reach the im-

aginative memory. They have this strangeness: they touch the heart of an Irish person in Ireland, as the songs of his own country would touch the heart of an exile. The newspapers are now bringing actuality into the conflict, and the old convention of the political songs is being destroyed. But still, the street ballads sings of Ireland under the name of "Granuaile" and "Shan Van Vocht."[1]

Every piper and fiddler on the roads of Ireland knows the "Royal Blackbird," and if you ask them for it, you will hear a tune to remember. The music is hard to associate with defeat, it is so beautiful and proud; nevertheless it celebrates the Stuart cause. The words that go with the music make another "secret song":—

"On a fair summer morning of soft recreation,
I heard a fair lady a-making a moan
With sighing and sobbing and sad lamentation,
A-saying, "My Blackbird most royal is flown.
My thoughts do deceive me,
Reflections do grieve me,
And I am overwhelmed with sad misery.
Yet if Death should blind me,
As true love inclines me,
My Blackbird I'll seek out wherever he be.

Once in fair England my Blackbird did flourish,
He was the chief flower that in it did spring,
Prime ladies of honour his person did nourish,
Because that he was the true son of a King.

[1] To the Irish mind it is natural that a symbolic speech should go with the announcement of National strivings. William Blake is certainly Irish when he speaks in the prophetic books of Albion and Jerusalem, of Erin, France and America, and the old men by an Irish fireside would be kindled by some of his esoteric passages.

But this false fortune,
Which still is uncertain,
Has caused the parting between him and me.
His name I'll advance,
In Spain and in France,
And I'll seek out my Blackbird wherever he'll be.

In England my Blackbird and I were together
When he was still noble and generous of heart,
And woe to the time when he first went from hither,
Alas! he was forced from thence to depart.
In Scotland he's deemed,
And highly esteemed,
In England he seemed a stranger to be.
Yet his name shall remain,
In France and in Spain,
All bliss to my Blackbird wherever he be.

It is not the ocean can fright me with danger,
For though like a Pilgrim I wander forlorn,
I may still meet with friendship from one that's a stranger,
Much more than from one that in England was born.
Oh, Heaven so spacious!
To Britain be gracious,
Though some there be odious to him and to me.
Yet joy and renoun,
And laurel shall crown,
My Blackbird with honour wherever he be."

One evening, in a Longford cottage, when the music of the "Royal Blackbird" had been played and the verses repeated, a man told me a story of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Since then in my mind, a gallant name is set to that gallant music. Lord Edward was amongst the organisers of the Insurrection of 1798, but he was struck down before the outbreak. He belonged to a family that was at the head of the Irish aristocracy, and he had married

the mysterious protegée of Madame de Genlis, Pamela, whom some thought to be the daughter of Philip Egalite.

The story told of the meeting of Pamela and Lord Edward, and, as related, it had the simplicity of the folk-tale and some of its charming turns. When he was a young man Lord Edward heard much of the lewdness of London. For a long time he did not credit the stories. He thought they were made up to discredit the people of London. More and more the stories oppressed him, and at last he decided to go in person and find out if London was really depraved. He went over. One night he put on a disguise, and went down a very evil street. Now, a lady in Paris had also been oppressed by such tales of wickedness. She had come to London, bringing her aunt. They had taken lodgings. One night the young lady disguised herself and went into the ill street. Like Lord Edward, she was concerned to discover or deny the depravity. Its bad report had brought Lord Edward and herself into the same street. The lady was disguised as an old beggar-woman.

Maybe she was wishful to know what sort was the young man who was in the wicked street at an ill hour. "*A mhic*," said she, "would you help an old woman to such a number?" Lord Edward offered his arm. She did not take it. They went down the street together. Lord Edward was very watchful, being in such a street and he noticed that the woman kept her hand from him. "Give me your hand," said he, but still she kept her hand away. Then he snatched her hand. It was the hand of a young

girl. "Who are you," said he. The girl ran from him, and let herself into a house. "To-morrow I'm going to Paris with my aunt," she said.

"The next day Lord Edward went to Paris. When he woke up in the hotel he asked what sport there was in the town. He was told that there would be a great ball that night in the Royal Palace. Lord Edward went to the ball, and the first one he saw among the dancers was the girl who had disguised herself. The moment she saw him she asked a lady to take her place in the dance, and she came over to him. It wasn't one hand she gave him this time. She gave him her two hands.

"He used to be out at night drilling the people with Wolfe Tone. She never said, 'Edward, where were you last night?' though she knew it would turn out bad work for him. His mother used to be very fond of her. She was so fond of her that she used to take the young woman to sleep on her lap. But after the death of Lord Edward the mother turned altogether against the young wife. She was very lonesome then. She had three children. She left Ireland, bringing her children with her, and no one had any account of them ever after."

In this tale the people are of our world. Beside it I will put a story in which some of the characters are of the strange kingdom of the sea. The tale does not belong to our county; it was told to myself and some others by a priest who had come amongst us from the kingdom of Kerry.

Iveragh, in West Kerry, opens out of the Atlantic ocean. Once upon a time a boat was coming in from the fishing. The anchor was let down, and the men

found they could not draw it up again. Lots were taken as to who should dive to release the anchor. The lot fell on the one who had let it down. He was "Clusach" O'Falvey, a youth noted for his exploits on the land. He was a great runner, and the best in the district at the game of hurling. O'Falvey went into the depths of the sea.

This was the reason why the anchor could not be drawn up. Its swing had forced the door of a palace under the waves. There was a lady there, and one of her eyes had been put out by the stroke of the anchor. O'Falvey entered the palace; he was held by the lady as an *eric* (compensation) for the loss of her eye. All sorts of tempting viands were offered him, but O'Falvey declined to partake. He knew that any of the food would lessen his desire to return to the land. He told the sea-fairy that there was one business to which he was bound, and he gave her his word that he would return to the sea when that business was accomplished. She released him then, and O'Falvey went back to his comrades. I do not know that he told his adventure, but I know that he had no inclination to leave the world of wind and light. He did not abide by his promise. He no longer went fishing. He knew that the fairy had power over the element, and he made no approach to the sea.

One day the young men of Iveragh were playing at hurley. O'Falvey struck the ball. So great was the force of his stroke that it drove the ball as far as the bare strand. O'Falvey made after the ball. Striking it before him, he headed back to the players. He had forgotten his dread of the waves in the rush

of the game. But now the sea lifted itself up, as a great crest of waves, and came after the man. The runner was too swift for the first line of water, But the sea took the ball before it drew back to gather force. A second time the sea rose up. With mighty power the waves came after the running man. This time the waves swept the hurley from his hand. Again the sea drew back to gather force. Each time the waves had gained something from the man. And now, with its last and mightiest impulse, the sea came after him. Fleet as a deer, O'Falvey ran for his naked life. The crest of the sea broke—the outer waves surrounded him—O'Falvey was taken by the sea.

It was with his comrades around him that he went back to the sea. Before he went below the waves he promised to send a token every year to the people on the land. For fourteen years the token came, a half-burnt sod of turf. Then it ceased to come on the waves, and the people knew that " Clusach " O'Falvey had lost his attachment to the upper world. Since that time the sea has covered a portion of the land of Iveragh.

The people have no sense of historic time. They say, " St Patrick and St Colum were going through the country, and at that time Farral Markey's grandfather lived on the Island." Here is the tale of how the fair was established at Ballinalea. Saint Patrick was passing through the village, and he called at a house for a drink of milk. " I'll have to give you the child's share," said the woman of the house, " for the times are very scarce since *Orangeism* broke out in this part of the country." " I'll not take any of

the milk, my poor woman," said Saint Patrick, " and I'll give you a direction that will be for the increase of your store. When next Tuesday comes walk down as far as the big tree. And if you meet a man coming towards you it will be for your luck. Do what he will tell you." That day week, when she went towards the big tree, the first person the woman met was a man driving a cow. He told her to drive the beast into her own byre. And that's how the first fair came to Ballinalea.

The heroic tales that are gathered round Finn and Cuchulain have been forgotten by the people of this place. Finn's name is remembered, but the hero has become a big eater and an extravagant liar. The other day I heard a story about the Gobaun Saor. He is out of the very oldest cycle of stories, for he was the Smith and Builder for the gods. In every part of the country stories are current concerning the Gobaun Saor and his son. They generally relate the stratagem by which the elder procured a wise wife for the simple-minded young man. Some of these tales are finely told in a book composed by a real Shanachie—Miss Ella Young's " Celtic Wonder Tales." " Do you know how the Gobaun Saor got a wife for his son?" said I to a story-teller. " I do," said he. Thereupon he told me an anecdote not given in Miss Young's book. " There were three women amongst the neighbours that might suit the son, and the old Gobaun brought the three of them into his house. He put the whole of his treasure into a chest and he let the women open it. " You'd be a long time spending all that's there," said the first woman. " With all that under your hand you'd

AN IRISH FOLK-TALE.

(From a rough sketch by Mr. E. A. Morrow. By permission of the artist.)

have an easy time," said the second woman. "Well," said the third woman, "as much as there's in it, if you didn't keep adding to it, it would soon go." The Gobaun Saor took that woman by the hand and brought her to sit down by the fire, and it was to her that he married his son.

In Longford the stories told are mainly humorous and satirical, but in Cavan—the next county—stories used to be current that had a gleam of strangeness in them. One that I remember is illustrated for me by the figure of a woman at a quern. In ancient Ireland it was the bondswoman's duty to grind corn with the quern-stone. A quern-stone suggests remote times, but in some parts of Ireland this primitive mill has come down to recent times. I have never seen anyone working a quern, but I have seen a quern-stone in the County Cavan. It was a woman in Cavan who told me this story, and she related it as having happened in her own family. The house she lived in was the scene of the story. The people of the house used to find that the corn left in the haggard was ground for them overnight. At first, I think, only a little corn was ground, for the work was done while there was light. Then they used to leave a candle lighted in the haggard, and a great deal of corn was ground. They never caught sight of the person who used to work the quern. The people of the house agreed to watch, and they made a window that looked into the haggard. One night they saw the person who ground the corn. There was a strange woman turning the quern-stone. She was bare naked. When daylight came the woman went away.

The people of the house were anxious to do something for the woman. The young man went to the town and bought a silk dress. They laid the silks beside the quern. They watched through the window again. The woman came in and sat down by the quern. Then she saw the silk dress and she put it on her. She sat at the quern again and ground corn for a while. She looked down at herself. Said she, "Silk to the elbows; and I grinding at the quern." She stood up then and went out; she was never seen again.

The woman who told me that story used to say that when the hens murmured on the roost they were telling each other where the Danes hid their treasures after their defeat at Clontarf. In that part of Ireland a good deal of folk-lore centres round the Danes and their treasures. It was the Danes, they say, who had the secret of the Heather Ale. Stevenson has made a ballad about the Heather Ale, giving the secret to the Picts, I think, and in his truly Gaelic book, "The Lost Pibroch," Neil Munro has a fine story on the same theme. In the Scots story the secret is held by a single Gaelic clan. The "Danes" of the Cavan story-teller are connected with the Scandinavian invaders only by a piece of pseudo-history. In English-speaking districts of Ireland, "Danes," I think, equates "De Danaan," the gods or culture people of the Irish Celts. It has this significance only in places where the Irish name for the Scandinavian people ("Lochlannach") has been forgotten. If I am right, the woman's reference to the fowls would be the last words of an old Celtic tradition.

My mind is carried on to another story I heard in the same house when I was a child. Although the story has been published, I would like to evoke an atmosphere by setting it here. I will give the story in the words of Lady Wilde :—

THE HORNED WITCHES

A rich woman sat up late one night carding and preparing wool, while all the family and servants were asleep. Suddenly a knock was given at the door, and a voice called : " Open ! Open ! "

" Who is there ? " said the woman of the house.

" I am the Witch of the One Horn," was answered.

The mistress, supposing that one of her neighbours had called and required assistance, opened the door, and a woman entered, having in her hand a pair of wool carders, and bearing a horn on her forehead, as if growing there. She sat down by the fire in silence, and began to card the wool with violent haste. Suddenly she paused and said aloud : " Where are the women ? They delay too long."

Then a second knock came to the door, and a voice called as before : " Open ! Open ! "

The mistress felt herself constrained to rise and open to the call, and immediately a second witch entered, having two horns on her forehead, and in her hand a wheel for spinning the wool.

" Give me place," she said, " I am the Witch of the Two Horns " ; and she began to spin as quick as lightning.

And so the knocks went on, and the call was heard, and the witches entered, until at last twelve women sat round the fire—the first with one horn, the last with twelve horns. And they carded the thread, and turned their spinning wheels, and wound and wove, all singing together an ancient rhyme, but no word did they speak to the mistress of the house. Strange to hear and frightful to look upon were these twelve women, with their horns and their wheels ; and the mistress felt near to death, and she tried to rise that she might call for help ; but she could not move, nor could she utter a word or a cry, for the spell of the witches was upon her.

Then one of them called to her in Irish, and said :

" Rise, woman, and make us a cake."

Then the mistress searched for a vessel to bring water from the well that she might mix the meal and make the cake, but she could find none. And they said to her :

" Take a sieve and bring water in it."

And she took the sieve and went to the well ; but the water poured from it, and she could fetch none for the cake, and she sat down by the well and wept. Then a voice came by her and said :

" Take the yellow clay and moss and bind them together, and plaster the sieve so that it will hold."

This she did, and the sieve held water for the cake. And the voice said again :

" Return, and when thou comest to the north angle of the house, cry aloud three times and say, ' The Mountain of the Fenian Women and the sky over it is all on fire.' "

And she did so.

When the witches inside heard the call, a great terrible cry broke from their lips, and they rushed forth with wild lamentations and shrieks, and fled away to Slieve-namon, where was their chief abode. But the Spirit of the Well bade the mistress of the house to enter and prepare her home against the enchantments of the witches if they returned again.

And first, to break their spells, she sprinkled the water in which she had washed her child's feet (the feet-water) outside the door on the threshold ; secondly, she took the cake which the witches had made in her absence, of meal mixed with the blood drawn from the sleeping family. And she broke the cake in bits, and placed a bit in the mouth of each sleeper, and they were restored ; and she took the cloth they had woven and placed it half in and half out of the chest with the padlock ; and lastly, she secured the door with a great cross-beam fastened in the jambs, so that they could not enter. And having done these things she waited.

Not long were the witches in coming back, and they raged and called for vengeance.

" Open ! Open ! " they screamed. " Open, feet-water ! "

" I cannot," said the feet-water, " I am scattered on the ground, and my path is down to the Lough."

" Open, open, wood and tree and beam ! " they cried to the door.

"I cannot," said the door; "for the beam is fixed in the jambs, and I have no power to move."

"Open, open, cake that we have made and mingled with blood," they cried again.

"I cannot," said the cake, "for I am broken and bruised, and my blood is on the lips of the sleeping children."

Then the witches rushed through the air with great cries, and fled back to Slieve-namon, uttering strange curses on the Spirit of the Well, who had wished their ruin; but the woman and the house were left in peace, and a mantle dropped by one of the witches in her flight was kept hung up by the mistress as a sign of the night's awful contest; and this mantle was in possession of the same family from generation to generation for five hundred years after.

The people of the Midlands have a vigorous and imaginative speech. "Gold," says a man to whom I have been listening, "doesn't all the world want it?—the man digging in the fields, the priest going up to Mass, the fool upon the road, the child upon the knee! If you hold it up before it, won't the child turn to the gold?" They have been talking about children who have been left orphans. "Sorra a bit so-and-so would care if they went the way of the wild birds." "Michael was the soundest child that ever blessed his face. And he wouldn't be put out (embarrassed or perplexed) if he saw you coming down the road with horns on you. He never let the red roar out him." "Some children," says another, "would come to you on a silk thread, and with others the chain of a ship wouldn't pull them." The talk flows on in humour and satire, with proverbs and bits of poetry, and always with vivid illustration. "Did you know such a person?" I asked. "Do I know him, do I know him? Do I know me oul' shirt. Aye, I know him as well as I

know bread." The woman gave a description that exactly fitted the impetuous person we referred to. "Murty came in with a windy hat on him, and threw goold down on the counter. 'Murty-Windy-hat,' she called him, and the name gives the atmosphere that goes with the man. A slow and caution character she called 'Martin-steal-upon-larks.' The person they spoke about 'Murty,' has fine speech. He and his wife are a quarrelling couple. The other day I went into their house and found a silence between the pair, and an atmosphere that was still tense. 'What's the matter with you, Norah,' said I to the woman, 'There's an oul' divil eating the flesh off me,' she said, using the phrase like a single line in tragic drama. The man spoke to me outside. 'She sticks her eyes into me when I come in, and the sort of a temper I have, the brain does be leppin off me.' He made an apology in a speech that was poetry in everything except form. "I'm running the four winds of the world, striving to get them bread. I would not know why the people were dressed nor when the holidays came, I would be that bent with the hardship.' Once, while I was taking down a song, Murty spoke to me about the virtues of a certain well. I wrote down his phrase. Afterwards I thought this was the expression he had used, 'The water of that well . . . when the sun is on the stones the coldness of it would shake the teeth in your head.' But Murty had a better sense of the balance of a sentence. He had said, 'The water of that well . . . when the sun would be splitting the flags, the coldness of it would shiver the teeth in your head.'"

Educated people find it hard to believe that an Irish peasant, when speaking, has in his mind a compelling sense of style. I believe that it is so. A man said, "he was offered gallons of gold in Cavan gaol to betray the country." He used "gallons" with "gold" for the alliteration. Another man said, "I could have made monuments with money, if I stayed in America." "He is drowned in debt."

It is said that the English peasant has a vocabulary of from 300 to 500 words. Doctor Pedersen took down 2500 words of the vocabulary of the Irish speakers of the Arran Islands. Doctor Douglas Hyde wrote down a vocabulary of 3000 words from people in Roscommon who could neither read nor write, and he thinks he fell short by 1000 words of the vocabulary in actual use. He suggests that in Munster—especially in Kerry—the average vocabulary in use amongst Irish speakers is probably between 5000 and 6000 words. Behind this abundant vocabulary there is a highly developed social sense. Now, satire equally with agreeable conversation is a product of the highly developed social sense, and, in peasant Ireland, satire is current, and has noticeable effect. "Isn't my wife a well-discoursed woman?" said a young farmer, speaking of one in whom the literary and social feeling had run to seed. His father made answer: "She thinks she is as famed for her conversation as Daniel O'Connell, but there's as much heed given to her as to the dog barking on my ditch outside." The old man ate a meal in his son's house one day, and afterwards he spoke of his daughter-in-law's housekeeping. "God made meat," says he, "and somebody else made cooks." Satire is the product

of the social sense thwarted and so is invective. In an organised community invective is rarely permitted, and the thwarted social feeling that would express itself in invective is passed off in epigram. Epigram is current, but with the highly developed social sense, there is in peasant Ireland primitive force and elemental freedom, and consequently one gets terribly charged invective. Two men had a quarrel in the town, and as one passed the other spat out. I heard the first man say, "Dirty Darby, that was reared at a beggarwoman's paunch; many's the time my mother filled a gallon for you." Irish writing is full of invective. An astonishing sample is given in a poem which Doctor Hyde has translated in "The Religious Songs of Connacht"—"Bruadar and Smith and Glinn." The man who packed this invective into tight and varied verse was a real poetic artist. He intertwines the names of his three enemies—Bruadar, Smith and Glinn—in every stanza, and using every name that the Gaels had given the Deity—The Son, The King of the Angels, The King of Brightness, The Son of the Virgin—he puts them under the ban of God.

BRUADAR AND SMITH AND GLINN

A Curse

Bruadar and Smith and Glinn,
Amen, dear God, I pray,
May they lie low in waves of woe,
And tortures slow each day.
Amen!

Bruadar and Smith and Glinn,
Helpless and cold, I pray,
Amen! I pray, O King,
To see them pine away.
Amen!

Bruadar and Smith and Glinn,
May flails of sorrow flay!
Cause for lamenting, snares and cares,
Be theirs by night and day!
Amen!

Blindness come down on Smith,
Palsy on Bruadar come,
Amen, O King of Brightness! Smite
Glinn in his members numb.
Amen!

Smith in the pangs of pain,
Stumbling on Bruadar's path,
King of the Elements, Oh, Amen!
Let loose on Glinn Thy Wrath.
Amen!

For Bruadar gape the grave,
Up-shovel for Smith the mould,
Amen, O King of the Sunday! Leave
Glinn in the devil's hold.
Amen!

Terrors on Bruadar rain,
And pain upon pain on Glinn,
Amen, O King of the Stars! And Smith
May the devil be linking him.
Amen!

Glinn in a shaking ague,
Cancer on Bruadar's tongue,
Amen, O King of the Heavens! and Smith
For ever stricken dumb.
Amen!

Thirst but no drink for Glinn,
Smith in a cloud of grief,
Amen! O King of the Saints; and rout
Bruadar without relief.
Amen!

Smith without child or heir,
  And Bruadar bare of store,
Amen, O King of the Friday! Tear
  From Glinn his black heart's core.
Amen.

Bruadar with nerveless limbs,
  Hemp strangling Glinn's last breath,
Amen, O King of the World's Light!
  And Smith in grips with death.
Amen!

Glinn stiffening for the tomb,
  Smith wasting to decay,
Amen, O King of the Thunder's Gloom,
  And Bruadar sick alway.
Amen!

Smith like a sieve of holes,
  Bruadar with throat decay,
Amen, O King of the Orders! Glinn
  A buck-show every day.
Amen!

Hell-hounds to hunt for Smith,
  Glinn led to hang on high,
Amen, O King of the Judgment Day!
  And Bruadar rotting by.
Amen!

Curses on Glinn, I cry,
  My curse on Bruadar be,
Amen, O King of the Heaven's high!
  Let Smith in bondage be.
Amen!

Showers of want and blame,
  Reproach, and shame of face,
Smite them all three, and smite again,
  Amen, O King of Grace!
Amen!

Melt, may the three away,
  Bruadar and Smith and Glinn,
Fall in a swift and sure decay
  And lose, but never win.
Amen!

May pangs pass through thee, Smith,
  (Let the wind not take my prayer),
May I see before the year is out
  Thy heart's blood flowing there.
Amen!

Leave Smith no place nor land,
  Let Bruadar wander wide,
May the Devil stand at Glinn's right hand,
  And Glinn to him be tied.
Amen!

All ill from every airt
  Come down upon the three
And blast them ere the year be out
  In rout and misery.
Amen!

Glinn let misfortune bruise,
  Bruadar lose blood and brains,
Amen, O Jesus! hear my voice,
  Let Smith be bent in chains.
Amen!

I accuse both Glinn and Bruadar,
  And Smith I accuse to God,
May a breach and a gap be upon the three,
  And the Lord's avenging rod.
Amen!

Each one of the wicked three
  Who raised against me their hand,
May fire from heaven come down and slay
  This day their perjured band.
Amen!

May none of their race survive,
  May God destroy them all,
Each curse of the psalms in the holy books
  Of the prophets upon them fall.
Amen!

Blight skull, and ear, and skin,
  And hearing, and voice, and sight,
Amen! before the year be out
  Blight, Son of the Virgin, blight.
Amen!

May my curses hot and red,
  And all I have said this day,
Strike the Black Peeler too,
  Amen, dear God, I pray!
Amen!

Besides the supreme piece of invective, there is only one thing fit to be placed. It is also given in "The Religious Songs of Connacht." A poet cries out: "There are three watching for my death—the Devil, the Children, and the Worms;—the Worms that would rather have my body than my soul and my wealth; the Children that would rather have my wealth than my soul should be at one with my body; the Devil that has no desire for the wealth of the world, nor for my body, only for my soul. Christ that was crucified upon the tree, let the Worms, the Devil, and the Children be hanged by a gad."

At the root of Irish social life there is the will and the power to satirize. That life has two aspects; one shows a world of kindly friendships wherein the binding power of blood is strongly recognised—a community where the social sense has been cultivated and where social intercourse is a necessity. And the

THE TINKER'S CURSE.

(From a water-colour drawing by Jack B. Yeats, in possession of Mr. George W. Russell.

other aspect shows never ending quarrels between families of the same blood, constant and vexatious litigation, outbursts of satire and invective. Both aspects of Irish life obtain fine expression in Irish literature. We have vivid praises of men and women, charming appreciations of kindly townlands and villages, and above all, deeply felt and personal lamentations for the dead. Beside this, we have humorous satire, passionate and deliberate invective, potent and elaborate curses. The satirical part of the Irish mind is very well represented in recent Irish writing. That essay in personalities which Mr George Moore has just published, "Hail and Farewell," is distinctive of the Irish spirit, and the Irish invective is continued in Synge's "Shadow of the Glen," "The Well of the Saints," "The Playboy of the Western World." The speech of the Irish peasant is fine material for the dramatist, and the Irish dramatists have made use of it. Synge's dialogue reproduces the energy and the extravagance of the people's speech—"It's that you'd be saying surely if you had seen him and he after drinking for weeks, rising up in the red dawn—or before it maybe, and going out into the yard as naked as an ash-tree in the moon of May and shying clods against the visage of the stars till he'd put the fear of death into the *bonavs* and the screeching sows." [1]

I know scores of peasants who could speak in this fashion. It is true that Synge's dialogue is a splendid convention; all the characters speak to the same rhythm and their speech is made up of words and phrases from different parts of the country with un-

[1] "Playboy of the Western World."

authorized Gaelic idioms. Nevertheless I feel as much reality in Synge's as in the speech of that master of Irish life and manners,—Carleton. Curiously enough, in a book, not written by an Irishman —in Borrow's "Lavengro"—I find a passage that is true to the dignity that is always in the heartfelt speech of the Irish people. "An old woman, at least eighty, was seated on a stone, cowering over a few sticks burning feebly on what had once been a right noble and cheerful hearth; her side-glance was towards the door as I entered, for she had heard my footsteps, I stood still and her haggard glance rested upon my face. 'Is this your house, Mother?' I demanded in the language which I thought she could best understand. 'Yes, my own house, my own house; the house of the broken-hearted . . . my own house, the beggar's house, the accursed house of Cromwell.'"

The Anglo-Irish idiom is naturally formed and logically constructed; every deviation from the standard English tongue has its reason and its explanation. Those interested in the philological side should read the two scholarly articles which Miss Hayden and Professor Hartog contributed to the *Fortnightly Review* in April and May, 1909, also Dr Joyce's racy book, "English as we speak it in Ireland." Many peculiarities in Irish phrase are survivals of Gaelic locution. "I saw him and he going the road," is an instance. The use of "and" in this way is a survival of Old Irish. "I am after writing a letter," does not mean that the speaker is in train to write a letter, it means that he has recently written it. Sir John Rhys, not finding

this idiom in any other Indo-European language is inclined to believe that it came into Irish as a literal translation from some pre-Arryan tongue. There is another interesting tense in Anglo-Irish. In reply to the query, "Does it rain here?" the native says, "It bees raining" or "It does be raining." He is making an attempt to reach an exactitude that is possible in Gaelic. As the student of O'Growny knows there are three different ways of saying in Irish "George is a ruler;" the use of the first form would imply that George is identical with a ruler, the use of the second, that George had become a ruler, while the use of the third form would imply that George rules intermittently. The verb in the third form corresponds with the English "be," and so "bees" and "does be" are used in Anglo-Irish as a frequentitive tense; thus: "he bees lame in the winter" or "he does be a cripple in the winter." In pronunciation many peculiarities are survivals, not vulgarisms. We still give the diphthong "ea" the value that Shakespeare gave it.

> "And for a woman were thou first created.
> Till Nature as she wrought thee, fell a-doting
> And by addition me of thee defeated."

Our pronunciation of English is derived from the Elizabethan pronunciation. Certain English writers unaware of the mutations of their own language thought that our treatment of "ea" was an ignorant departure from standard pronunciation, and, by a false analogy they have made us say "Praste," for "Priest," "belave," for "believe" "indade" for "indeed." But, the old English sounds of "ie" and

" ee " have not changed and our pronunciation of these diphthongs is in perfect agreement with standard pronunciation.

The Gael has always been marked for his abundant and vivid speech and for his conspicuous martial qualities. " Born soldiers of fortune," says the German historian. " Very great scorners of death," say the Elizabethan observers. Because of his conspicuous courage and his impassioned speech the Irishman has been credited with a quality that is supposed to go with these—the lover's passion and the lover's devotion. But love, as the English and the Continental writers think of it has very little place in Irish life. Amongst the peasantry lovemaking is more often a subject for satire than for romance, and our cousins—the Gaels of Scotland say of us " Comh neamhghradhmhar le Eireannach," " as loveless as an Irishman."

CHAPTER VII

A MARRIAGE

Michael Cunliffe had for living children Martin, John and Julia, Matt, Rose, Francis, and Ellen. Martin and Julia were in America; Matt was in a shop in Cahirmona, and Rose was married in the district. Three were at home, John, Francis and Ellen; John was the eldest of these and the farm would come to him, and Francis was a young fellow working on land until he could make some settlement for himself. Ellen had just passed the age when she was referred to as "the gearcallach" and spoken to as "Sissy" by the people who came into the house. She had the look which a Connachtman saw in the women of the Midlands, *Uisge faoi thalamh*, "Water under the ground." This young girl with her copper-coloured hair and shrewd eyes could hold her own in a game of intrigue.

The Cunliffe house was illuminated; a candle was lighted in the kitchen window, a lamp in the upper bedroom, and another candle in the lower bedroom. This illumination was the sign of some excitement in the house. A marriage was being arranged for John, and the party on the other side were to visit Cunliffe's this evening.

Although lights were in the windows it was still the early dusk of an autumn day. Francis had

brought up the horse. The cattle were coming up the long bohereen that led from the road. Michael Cunliffe walked behind his cattle. On his left hand were some acres of tumbled bog and waste ground where rushes stood beside pools of water. The ground on his right hand showed the black soil of the bog. The potatoes were being dug, and on the ridge were spectral potato-stalks. Back of the house there was a tillage field, a pasture field and a meadow with after-grass. Forty years before Cunliffe had come into the place from a neighbouring county. It was after the famine, land was cheap, and he got about thirty acres of land, good and bad, at a low rent. He had built the house himself; he had dug the clay out of the pit, mixed it and raised his walls foot by foot. Friends had helped him to lay the long beams that held the roof. He had woven branches through the beams and had his roof thatched with the straw of his crop. Michael Cunliffe had been living with kin of his, the Markeys, and when the house was built he had married a woman who was a far-out member of the family. Michael's wife was no longer living.

The horse was stabled at the end of the byre. After Francis had gone into the house his father remained with the cattle. Michael would praise a woman by saying that she was kind to a cow, or a young man by saying he had a good hand on a horse. His byre was a second household. He had pride in his horse and cattle and he had comradeship with them.

He was stroking down the horse when the car with the visitors turned off the road on to the bohereen.

The Cunliffes had gone far to make an alliance

for John. They were fairly secure, and they expected a good dowry with the woman that would come into their house. A well-off and respected farmer in the County Leitrim, John Owens, was on the look-out for a good match for Mary, his daughter, and he and Michael Cunliffe had come together at a fair. Subsequently John had visited at the Owens' house. Negotiations had reached the stage when the other party might look over the Cunliffes' ways and means. Mary was making the visit with her people. John had gone to meet John Owens' car. He had been given a place beside the father, and Mary and her mother sat the other side. When they came to the courtyard, Michael came out of the byre and welcomed them to the place. Rose had come to assist at the function, and she and Ellen brought the Owens' women into the house. John and Francis looked to the horse and car, and the elders went on to look over the farm. John Owens had observed the ground between the road and the house. They went into the byre and then they looked at the sow that had her second litter. The car and cart were good vehicles, the stack of turf showed a plentiful supply, and the hay was well-saved. The pair went into the field at the back of the house and looked at two well-grown calves that were on the stubble. Then they went into the meadow and stopped before a young horse. "He'll be worth fifteen pounds at the Fair of Cahirmona," said John Owens. "More," said Michael Cunliffe. "Not much more." "Three pounds more." "Ay, I'd give that for him." There were a few sheep on the meadow. "They belong to

my son, Francis," said Michael Cunliffe. "He'll be settling for himself soon. Now I'll tell you what's coming to the boy. There's forty pounds in the bank for him, and he has the little stock that you see. Next year he may have a few heifers. There was talk of him marrying a young woman that has a farm beyond this. But I hear that he has fallen into fancy with a girl that's back from America. I believe they'd have enough between them to take a little farm and stock it."

"The girls that come back from America are wasted before they settle down here," said John Owens.

"You're right," said Michael. "But I'd like you to know that whatever happens, Francis won't be taking anything off the farm."

"And what about the young man in Cahirmona?"

"He has something by him, and there are people who wouldn't be afraid to trust him with more. He'll be opening a place of his own in a Meath town."

"I like your way of doing," said John Owens, "and I like the look of the place. I'd like half of Mary's fortune to be left with the young people."

"No, John. I won't listen to that at all."

"I want the young people to have the handling of some money."

"Well, there's no use in saying one thing and meaning another. I must have the grasp of everything in the place. It all came from me and it all must stay with me as long as I'm above the ground. Ellen has to get her fortune out of it, and everything else that's in my purse and place, will go to your daughter and my son."

"How much do you think I'm thinking of giving with Mary."

"A hundred pounds."

"I'm not altogether as well off as that."

"I won't be bargaining with you. If you don't say a hundred pounds, John, we won't talk of a marriage."

"Well, I'll say a hundred pounds. It's more than we thought of when we were young, but times are changed, and changed for the better, thank God. A hundred pounds. Here's my hand to you."

"*Saoighail fada agat.*"

Then they went into the house. John and Francis were standing before the fire in the kitchen, and Michael Cunliffe briefly told them the terms of the engagement. He was satisfied. Ellen came from the upper room and announced that supper was ready. Before each place there was a plate of roast goose and ham, and a glass of whiskey was beside each plate. Mary was seated with her hands on her lap. She looked at a picture of the Blessed Virgin that was over the bed. Under it was a withered branch of last Palm Sunday. Some affection for her surroundings began to come into Mary's mind. John came to her and pressed her to drink a glass of whisky. Her voice was high-pitched with nervousness. "As true as God is over me," she said, "I'll drink none." "I'd rather have the girl that drank before my face than the one that would go behind the door and do it," said Michael Cunliffe. "Drink it," said her father. "Stand up with John Cunliffe and drink the glass." "Drink it, Mary, lamb," said her mother. Her face was red with blushes

when she drank the glass. Then she sat still and John held her hand. "Long life to ye both," said Michael. "You are both of honest people. And may they be honest, them you leave behind you." Some simplicity in Mary's thought and speech gave Ellen, who had been a monitoress in the school, a touch of patronage towards her. She thought of Mary as coming from a remote and uncivilised place, and her want of self-possession seemed part of her barbarism. When the Owens were returning, John Cunliffe went some miles with them. It was near morning when he came back, and he and his father sat talking until they went out to their work. Rose stayed the night, and the two talked of Ellen's future.

Two weeks after, John married, and Mary Owens came into Michael Cunliffe's house. Francis got married in the spring. When the elder brother brings in a wife, the young girl who was the daughter becomes the step-daughter of the house. Cunliffe's house no longer stood for a single interest—there was Owen and Mary's interest, there was her father's, and there was Ellen's own interest. The younger girl was subject to Mary. She would be sent out for turf when she wanted to read, and bid milk the cows when she wanted to dress for the evening. These things Ellen had done before, but she had done them in the interest of the indivisible Cunliffe household. Now her duties were a tribute of labour.

II

She brought in the turf on an evening and sat down by the fire. Bridget Rush was there, and there was

no one else in the house. Bridget used to go from house to house, knitting stockings and mending clothes. She was everyone's familiar. "I'm thinking of getting a good husband for you, Miss Cunliffe," she said. "Who would he be, Bridget?" said Ellen. "A fine young man that has just come back from America." "Hugh Daly, is it?" "Indeed it is Hugh Daly." Ellen had considered Hugh Daly. His American clothes set him off well, and besides, he was a well-built, good-looking fellow. Hugh Daly was settling down on a farm his father had minded not over-well. But before taking root he had let himself out in two or three drinking bouts, and when in these he had not been behind in using the strong hand. "He'll be a steady man when he begins to put his little place into trim," said Bridget Rush. "They say it is a poor place," said Ellen. "Well, if a woman came in with a fair fortune they could make it a tidy place in a few years." "Katie has to get her fortune out of the place," said Ellen. "I'm not asking what your fortune is, daughter," said Bridget Rush, "but your father, sure, would give a fortune with you that would let Hugh settle with Katie, and give ye a good start."

She met Hugh Daly in a house where there was a dance. He addressed her as "Miss Cunliffe," and asked her to dance with him. There was good-humoured swinging and squeezing, but Ellen Cunliffe had a prestige that kept her clear of these familiarities. The girls and the young men went home in groups and not in couples. Hugh Daly walked beside Ellen and two or three other girls. In a week Ellen and Rose knew that he was on for making a match.

Sometimes when Ellen was there he would come into Rose's house, and when she was going home he would leave Ellen part of the road. On a market day in Cahirmona he entertained them in a room over the shop where Matt was an assistant. Hugh Daly had taken a sup that day, and on his way back he told Rose of his regard for Ellen. It was agreed that he should make a proposal to Michael Cunliffe that week.

He did not tell Rose what money he needed with Ellen. These were his circumstances. Hugh Daly's sister lived on the farm, and she would have to get her portion out of it. Moreover, his father had been a drinking man, and the farm was badly wasted. The evening that he went to her father's Ellen stayed at her sister's house. Hugh came in on his way back. He was angry at the offer Michael Cunliffe had made him. "Your father wants to make little of me," he said. "He only offered fifty pounds. If it was anyone else that asked for you he'd have offered eighty. What good would fifty pounds be to us? Katie must get her money, and there's hardly any stock on the farm." He parted from Ellen not on the best of terms.

Ellen cried when he had gone, and for consolation Rose gave her some practical advice. She went back to the house. Her father had to go to a fair early in some far-off place, and he was asleep in the settle in the kitchen. John and Mary were in the room above. She put out the light and sat by the fire that was covered over with ashes. What was the good of Rose's advice? Hugh Daly would marry another girl, and her father would make a match for

her. If it were with a man in a distant place she would consent to marriage readily enough. She might go to America in spite of Julia's protest. Or she might ask her father for her money and enter a convent. Yes, that is what she would do. She would become a nun and teach in a convent school.

Then she heard Mary talking in the room above. "Where would she get eighty pounds when everybody gets their rightful share? My father's money wasn't given to make a big fortune for Ellen Cunliffe." Mary was jealous of the thought that Ellen claimed a dowry almost as big as the dowry she brought into the house. "Me that had the biggest fortune that ever came into this townland." Ellen heard Mary say. "Deed she won't. Never will Hugh Daly bring her into his house," Mary said again.

Ellen swore by the beam of her father's roof that she would leave that house triumphantly and marry Hugh Daly. Thirty pounds was a great deal of money, but she remembered Rose's advice. In the end the Dalys might do with seventy pounds. Julia might send ten pounds from America. She would claim the eggs of a year for her perquisite. Yes, and if her father got a good price for the young horse, she would put something to her dowry. She went up to her room, and when her father rose she came down and got him breakfast. He ate by candle-light. "Hugh Daly," said her father, "isn't the first that spoke about you." "I wouldn't care to marry any other man," said Ellen. "That's the talk of a young girl." "I'm in earnest, father," said she. When he was going out of the door she spoke to him about the eggs. Her father was agreeable, but she and he

knew that the granting of the eggs depended upon Mary's good-will.

Mary was really a good-natured woman. She did not put any obstacles in the way of Ellen getting the benefit of the eggs. Afterwards she got very sympathetic, and she asked that some of her money be put to Ellen's dowry. Ellen had now about sixty-five pounds, and she let Hugh Daly know of the rise in her fortune. That year in America, Julia worked so hard that her hair became suddenly grey. But she had made a good deal of money, and was able to send ten pounds to Ellen. She married Hugh Daly within the year, bringing to his house a fortune of seventy-five pounds.

III

Ellen is now the mother of seven children, and four of them are fine boys. She lives too near her brother's for perfect accord to be between the two families. She does not forget that she came into Hugh Daly's with a fortune less than he asked, or that the portion she brought was made up with a contribution from the share going to Mary and Owen. She has the mocking tongue that often breaks the peace between the two houses. At school her children are kept in competition with Mary's children, who are rude and somewhat dull. Michael, Mary's eldest boy, was in Ellen's house one evening when I was there. He had given a foolish answer to the priest, who had spoken to the children on the road. Ellen was laughing over the adventure, but she had a laugh that left it hard to say whether she laughed

with the boy or laughed at him. Michael knew enough of his aunt to discover the mockery in her mind. "Do you ever say your prayers, Ellen," said he. "I do, in troth," said Ellen. "I'll tell you, Michael," said she, "what I prayed for last night. I prayed that I would see ten cows, a horse and a car before this house, and that I would see your place with only an ass and a goat." "But, Michael, *a chara*," said she, "I'm only talking. We're the one blood, and what could I wish but good luck to you." She was sincere in both attitudes. And before Michael went she was teasing him again. In the summer before Julia was back from America, and there was a party for her at her father's house, the talk turned on money sent home, and Mary said a hasty word. Instantly Ellen rose up. Her self-control and her power of deliberate placing of word gave her the triumph. This evening, when Michael was about to go home, Ellen said, "Sit down, Michael, and let us talk of last summer when your Aunt Julia was at home." Her formulas reminded me of the opening of that splendid tale, "The Little Brawl of Allen." "Well, thanks be to God," said Finn, "we're all at peace. It's a long time since we were at peace before. Indeed, we weren't at peace, Goll, since the day I killed your father."

CHAPTER VIII

THE PEASANT PROPRIETOR

One evening I went to Brian Mulcahy's, a small farmer's house in the Irish Midlands. Brian and his sons were still from home, and while I waited for them Mrs Mulcahy entertained me. It was summer, and Mrs Mulcahy was in her bare feet. She was preparing a feed for the pigs, and she talked to me while I drank buttermilk, a beverage that is becoming rare in the farmhouses hereabouts.

The house is comfortable and well-kept, though it must seem harsh and bare to those who look for space and beauty in houses. There are four rooms in the house, and we sit in the place that is hall, kitchen, and living-room. In terms of stage directions the entrance is at back right, the fireplace takes up nearly the whole of the left end of the room. Like a huge candle-extinguisher, the chimney projects over the fire of turf that is on the floor. A crook hangs down, holding the pot above the fire. The big dresser is filled with delf and tins, the settle-bed is folded to make a bench against the wall. There are room doors right and left, and a ladder going up to a loft. The floor is of clay ; the roof is blackened and the walls are browned with smoke. A fiddle hangs on the wall, and there is a gun across the chimney.

For two generations a national struggle has been made on behalf of homes such as this. What has been the gain? That which is absolutely essential to peasantry whose whole capital is in their holding —security of tenure—has been gained. There have been reductions in rent as well, but these reductions have been met by an increase in expenditure. Things formerly made in the house or grown on the land are now bought in the shops.

In Ireland an economic holding is reckoned as fifty acres of mixed land. On such a holding the farmer and his family can live with some comfort and dignity, provided that the labour is supplied by the family. Half of the holdings in Ireland are only up to fifteen acres. The standard of comfort kept up on these holdings is nothing to boast of. There are many farms of ten and twelve acres where a decent standard is maintained, but in such cases the land is exceptionally good, or the family is very capable. My friends the Mulcahys have twelve acres. Brian is a good farmer, and his two sons are exceptional for the reason that they are in no hurry to get away from the land. He has a daughter also in the house. The rest of the children are in America.

The cattle are drawing home, and I go out to the "street," or courtyard, to meet Brian. We go into the byre with the cows. They are all good milkers, it appears. He sends his milk to the co-operative creamery, but he keeps Thursday's milk in addition to Saturday night's and Sunday's, so that there is still a churning in Brian's house and the women folk are not likely to lose the art of butter-making.

Brian Mulcahy has lived his life of sixty years in this spot. He has a certain poetry when he speaks of natural things. He spoke of the delight of the summer morning, and he referred to scent that is lost in the heat of the day, the smell of the bushes in the morning. He is of the genuine peasant stock. He is careful, and dislikes waste.

Tea had been made ready in the room above, and Brian and myself sat down with the two boys. The youngest is about eighteen and the other is twenty-six. The elder boy talks about the news given in the country paper. He was interested in the passage of the new Bill. He was not a mere agrarian; he was a Home Ruler. He was interested in agricultural organisation abroad, and had heard of the conditions in Denmark. His remarks on social problems were intelligent. The younger boy talked about his gun and the sport about the place. The father had been in the Land League struggle, but his vision of politics was hazy; he had the mind of those who made Daniel O'Connell into a folk-hero. He talks of the change that is coming over peasant Ireland. In his early days the farmers bought scarcely anything in the shops. Now they lived on shop goods—tea and white bread. In his day they made bread out of the wheat they had grown, they killed their own bacon, and went to the shop for salt and tobacco only. Men could not do a day's work on the food that was taken now: tea all day long, shop bread, American bacon. He knew men who could carry the plough from one side of the field to the other. When they came up from the work it was not tea they took, but buttermilk with meal mixed through it.

When we went down Bridget, Brian's daughter, had made the kitchen as tidy as a sitting-room, and for a while we sat around the hearth. Bridget is a capable girl who regards things gravely. She was going to America in September. I asked if she was sorry to leave home, and she said no. Her brothers and sisters were there, she was going amongst her own, and would enter a fuller life. Besides, "New York is full of Aughnalee people." The newspapers on the settle were American, and the photographs in the room above had come from America also. Ireland is a country partitioned between Great Britain and America.

As my talk showed an interest in reading, Bridget brought a book down to me. It had been published in America, and was a collection of about a thousand Irish songs. In the collection no personality was shown, and all the songs had been left anonymous. The gather-up of folk-songs, street ballads, culture poems, poet's corner verse had an extraordinary unity. It seemed to me to express the soul of Ireland more completely than any book I had ever seen. The political songs were defiant, the pathetic songs were resigned, the humorous songs exuberant; the play of wit was surely unique in national poetry. The love songs had charm rather than passion.

Brian accompanied me some of the way back, and talked to me of Bridget's departure. The elder boy was bringing a wife into the house soon, and Bridget would not stay. She would get a good dowry, but she had no wish to settle here. According to the peasant custom, the dowry brought in by the

brother's wife would go to the sister. In this case the money would help the younger boy to get a farm near the place, and an addition would come from the friends in America. This arrangement is characteristic of peasant sociology.

CHAPTER IX

AN AGRARIAN PRIEST

A GROUP of people are standing before a Midland farmhouse. They are quiet and reverent; Mass has just been celebrated in the house, and on the bench outside a coffin is laid. It is the forenoon of the day, and the sun is on the limewashed walls of the house. The priest stands at the threshold and speaks eulogy and consolation. He is a man of the peasantry, with a strong figure and a plain visage. He is dressed for riding. He finishes, and the father of the dead boy steps to the table and puts half a sovereign on the plate. Everyone in the assembly comes forward and puts down a piece of silver. Some who make contribution are here as deputies. "From Mrs Mulligan," says a girl; and she is followed by the representative of a Protestant farmer, "From Mr Irwin." The young man who was acolyte at the Mass counts the money and arranges it before the priest. Father Michael stands forward again. "The people have subscribed £5, 17s. 6d. This is generous, and I am very much obliged." His horse is led down the laneway, and Father Michael mounts and rides off. He will be at the burial-place before the funeral; the procession moves slowly, the coffin being carried on the shoulders of the men.

The contributions from the neighbours are called

" offerings," and the custom of making " offerings " to the priest is now only local. It had its origin in the penal days, when the only levy allowed the Catholic clergy were the " offerings " made to the priest who officiated at the burial. The custom persists in the Midland counties; it is galling to many families, but where it remains the priests are particular that the custom should not lapse. It is by way of being a piece of mutual aid, and social feeling enters into the " offerings." The people say: " Not much was thought of her. The priest didn't get £1 in offerings at her burial." " He was a respected man. There was £10 in offerings." It is a pity that the offerings are not transferred from burials to marriages. A contribution from the neighbours would enable poor couples to get married.

I kept a memory of Father Michael standing at the threshold on that bright forenoon. I had glimpses of him afterwards. I would see him stalking through the town or galloping a horse along a country road. He is not a popular priest. He sermonises the young men about the dangers of secret societies, and he forbids the girls to attend cross-road dances. Amongst the elders he has the name of being close-fisted with money. He was the people's adviser during the land agitation; he acted as their representative at the settlement, and negotiated the transfer of the land on very favourable terms. He is now working to bring about a settlement of the grazing question, and if his policy succeeds the man with the meagre farm will have a strip of the grazing ranch added to his land. The Agricultural Organisation Society have found him an able ally. Father

Michael has done much to make the Co-operative Creamery a success.

After an interval I came into personal contact with Father Michael. I had been staying with another priest, but I shall not write about him lest I be accused of favouring professors of my religion. I will only say that Father James is a scholar with a child's nature. An archæological excursion had brought us into the other parish. He was informing my mind on the subject of the Midland clans when Father Michael rode by. In his impetuous way, Father James jumped on to a wall and called to his colleague. "Now," said he to me, "here is the man who can tell you about the working of the Land Act." Father Michael rode over, and I was introduced. "We're in your territory, and I give this man over to you," said Father James. "Ask him to dinner, and tell him about the Land Bill." "Come to-night. Pot-luck," said Father Michael, and he rode away. "He knows more about the country than any man in Parliament," said Father James; "he has to deal with a rough people, too." I ventured to say that I thought the pastor was like the parish. "Did I ever tell you about Father Michael's uncle?" asked Father James. "He was in the next parish. The people were rougher there, and Father Frank was a fit man for them. It was a wide bit of country, but the parish priest did not like to waste money on a curate, and he worked the parish single-handed. Well, the Bishop was down at a confirmation, and he called Father Frank aside. "This is a wide parish," said the Bishop. "God's good! I've my health, and I'm well able for it,"

said Father Frank. "I must send you a curate," said the Bishop. "My Lord," said Father Frank, "if I had another horse I could do the work of two parishes." To the end Father Frank worked with horses, not with curates.

Father Michael lives in a house that was once occupied by Lord ——'s agent, a roomy house with a good garden in front. The door is opened by that singular person, a priest's housekeeper. We are shown into a room that has a horsehair sofa, a big table, chairs, and spittoons. It is a bachelor's house, without grace, without neat touches. The newspapers, that litter the room are the local paper, and *The Freeman's Journal*, and the volumes in the case are the books Father Michael brought from Maynooth. Dinner is served in another room. One can see that Father Michael is of monophagous habits. We have fowl and bacon, apple-pie, and strong tea. Whisky and different wines are available. Self-government has no immediate interest for Father Michael. The people want land, good land, and more land. The Government works in a muddled way, but it has good intentions, and the country improves. The new University will fit Catholics to hold well-paid places. The transfer of the land is the beginning of the country's salvation.

There is no typical priest; there are only individuals with a certain education and discipline, living in a certain environment. But in every parish priest there is an administrator—or shall I say a dictator? In an Irish democracy the priest is like some great, semi-independent public servant. He marries, christens and buries; says Mass and

preaches sermons; hears confession and attends sick calls; he manages the schools, helps to organise League branches and co-operative societies, advises the people as to the price they should pay for land, and the time they should spray potatoes. In addition to all this, he takes a very active interest in the conduct of his people. This immense power has its abuses; in Father Michael's parish, for instance, people are terrified of having a dance at their house, and young men and women can meet only in the most furtive way. In the next parish, however, there is absolute freedom. His dictatorship produces deadness or revolt, but not servility. "Ireland may be priest-ridden, but she refuses to be squire-ridden." In a district where the utmost frankness of speech is permitted a lapse in conduct is unknown. Some credit is due to Father Michael's vigilance even when we have made allowance for race-psychology and the long discipline of the Church.

What are his ideals as regards his people? He would have a nation of peasant proprietors. The boys and girls should marry early, and know as little as possible about the dangers and temptations of courtship. The young men should not belong to any dangerous political associations. Catholic Ireland should have intellectual distinction, for Father Michael, though he talks of well-paid places, has the peasant's disinterested feeling for learning. His racial pride would be satisfied when the once-dominant Protestant acknowledged Catholic ability in learning and in business.

CHAPTER X

THE COUNTRY SCHOOLMASTER

When the stranger enters the school there is a tumult of children rising to their feet in acknowledgment of the visit. The schoolroom recalls a peasant interior: the children are mannerly but not obtrusively disciplined, the walls are bare except for maps and tablets, the floor is broken, the desks and benches are without ease or elegance. A turf fire burns in the grate, and this fire is made up of a toll exacted from the children. (In the morning you might have seen some of them on their way to school, a turf from the home rick under the arm.) We are in the boys' school; about thirty pupils are present, and of these only a few are over sixteen. The schoolmaster, Mr Jeremiah Kerrigan, comes forward. He is a man of forty, with a foxy beard, sunken cheeks, and alert eyes. If you add to bluffness and a caustic humour something of command and a consciousness of learning you have the main indications of his character. He is of the village, and so his clothes are baggy and his hair is untrimmed. Mr Kerrigan takes us round the classes. The normal subjects are English (including grammar and composition), arithmetic, and geography. Some extra subjects—music, Irish as a foreign language, and mathematics—are also taught. Twenty-two hours

per week are given to secular instruction. The hours are from 9.30 A.M. to 3 P.M., and children attend school between the ages of 6 and 17. After sixteen the boys stay at home on the farm, go into business, or emigrate. Mr Kerrigan calculates that thirty per cent. of his pupils go to America.

Mr Jeremiah Kerrigan is at the service of a system arrived at through a balance of power between the Government of Ireland and the Churches. Seventy years ago the Government were unwilling to recognise the Catholic Church by the establishment of denominational schools. They established non-sectarian schools and allowed the clergymen to become the managers in their parish. The Irish schools may be defined as secular institutions under clerical control. In their rules and regulations the Commissioners inform us that the object of their system is "to afford combined literary and moral and separate religious instruction to children of all persuasions as far as possible in the same school, upon the fundamental principle that no attempt shall be made to interfere with the peculiar religious tenets of any description of Christian pupil." This regulation is strictly observed, though in the main each school is attended by pupils of the same religious faith. No religious emblems are shown, and religious instruction is outside routine. Clear notice of such instruction is given, and the pupils of a faith different from the majority have permission to withdraw. The parish schools under Catholic, Protestant, or Presbyterian managers are practically autonomous. After some years' service, Mr Jeremiah Kerrigan has a position of some dignity. He is looked on as

a colleague by the curate and the parish priest. After school he promenades the street with the priest. They walk up and down discussing affairs as reported in to-day's *Freeman's Journal.* "I see that Canon MacCabe is dead," says Mr Kerrigan. "Ay, indeed. He was nearly elected bishop once. Did you read Mr Redmond's speech?" "Yes; I wouldn't be surprised if we had a letter from the Archbishop in to-morrow's paper," and the conversation goes on to a discreet conference on parish affairs. The priest goes into his house. Mr Kerrigan goes on with the paper in his hand. As he passes the barracks he salutes the sergeant of the police.

Mr Jeremiah Kerrigan has a semi-public position. He keeps his school up to a certain standard, he has charges at Mass, he takes part in the teachers' conferences. He may not take an active interest in politics, but he does intermittent work for the local branch of the Gaelic League. As he walks along the road with his pipe lighted and the newspaper in his hand, he thinks of the English composition which he has set the upper class and the mathematical problem which he is working out with the monitor. He is from the peasantry. In his youth he showed some aptitude for study, became a monitor, and went up to the Catholic Training College in Dublin. His training consisted of two years' grind in which neither the dignities nor the amenities of teaching were revealed and one crammed as for a minor Civil Service appointment. He obtained a school, and started with a salary of £55 per annum, a capitation grant, and some fees for extra subjects. At present, with a capitation grant of 5s. per pupil, he has about

£110 per annum with a residence and some fees for extra subjects. Considering the standard of living in an Irish village, Mr Jeremiah Kerrigan is well off. What influence has he on the community? All his pupils can read, figure, and write an expressive letter. It should be noted that the system which he serves does not aim at making the peasantry more effective on the land. The tradition of good agriculture is lapsing in many parts of Ireland, and the schools have done nothing to make farming interesting. Our friend sometimes teaches agriculture as an extra subject; he expounds text-books, making the subject as remote as political economy. He teaches arithmetic, but not arithmetic as applied to farming. The peasants never know where they are economically; they sell their pigs at 4d. per lb. and buy American or Russian bacon at 9d. per lb. Intelligent children attend school for eight or nine years, and they receive a course of instruction that is mainly literary. Afterwards they read the newspapers and take an interest in politics.

Jeremiah Kerrigan once prided himself that he was a disinterested reader, but since his marriage he has read only the newspapers. His books include some of Dickens's novels, a volume of Scott's poetry, Macaulay's Essays, and a book of Anglo-Irish verse, "The Spirit of the Nation." He has three young children, and his house is fairly trim. He has a garden, and this afternoon he is bent on working at a horticultural experiment. In the evening the curate comes in for a quiet smoke. The two sit down to a glass of punch and a game of cards, and in a

desultory way they discuss the personalities of the parish. Some forward happenings enter their conversation—the branch of the Gaelic League, the Agricultural Society, the visit of the agricultural instructor.

CHAPTER XI

A GRAZIER

A ROAD winds like an iron band through a crude wilderness of green. There are no crops, there are no cottages; in the course of a day you meet one or two people on the road, who return your salutation in a low voice and with averted head. They are distinctive, the people of the grazing country, heavy of foot and heavy of look, bored people who take no interest in the weather even. Cattle roam across the pastures for a few months of the year, and on their increase in bulk the people live. Once the country was populated, but an economic change made the bullock more profitable than the peasant, and thereupon the landlords cleared the country of their tenantry. Now when you pass the last house in the street of a grazing town—Navan, say—you are in the wilderness.

Michael Fallon is a grazier who holds two thousand acres of uncultivated land. In certain parts of the country the peasantry have protested against the grazing system by driving cattle off the ranches. Hereabouts the country has been so effectively cleared that there are no peasantry to drive his cattle, and so Michael remains on good terms with the popular movement. He is a member of the United Irish League, and he subscribes to the party funds. He is a good

type of an Irishman, about forty, big and well built, with a spacious head that looks as if it had been hammered out of some weighty metal. His face looks weary and strained—bored we would say if Michael were a man of the town. It would seem as if his vigour and strength had fallen into waste and weariness. I fancy that Michael Fallon would smile if he read the papers that describe grazing as a prosperous Irish industry. He would tell you that it is not prosperous, and he knows that it is not an industry. On his two thousand acres of Irish territory only eight men are employed, to herd cattle, mend fences, and open gates. To him grazing is not an industry but a gambling transaction. In April he buys young cattle (stores) from the small farmers of the West, gives them a six months' feed on his rich pasture, and then sells them to the English or Scotch farmer, who finishes the stores into fat cattle. The grazier makes from £1 to £3 per head on the transaction, but he has borrowed the purchase price from a bank that charges five per cent. In Meath they say that it is only the first generation of graziers that make money. A man coming from a small farm and using a small farmer's economies can make money; but, when the children go to public schools, study for professions, and force up the scale of living, grazing has little profit. Now and again one hears that the importation of Canadian cattle is inevitable, and that the Irish grazing interest is menaced. These alarms do not make the Meath grazier anxious; he expects to buy stores at a cheaper rate from the Canadians.

The house and ranch that Michael Fallon owns were acquired by his father, an egg dealer, who made

money in a way that would have furnished Balzac with a sociological study. The house is a barrack-like building, square-built, with harsh, and rigid lines. There are no trees around the house, and all the business is transacted at the back door. Only a few of the twenty-six rooms are inhabited. Michael's brother, who is thinking of going on with his veterinary studies, hangs about the house, and his sister is sometimes here. She is reading for the university, not because she wants a degree, but because the student life gives her an escape to Dublin, where she has some social interests. In this part of the country there is no social life ; in the town below young men and women never have any social intercourse. Women stand behind little windows and watch people pass ; the cramped parlours are filled with useless furniture, and the only books are photograph albums and table editions of the poets. Michael Fallon's house has a visitor sometimes in the curate, and if Catherine is at home he and she go out cycling ; else the men sit together smoking and playing cards.

CHAPTER XII

THE COUNTRY TRADER

I PUT forward Mr James Covey as representing the Country Trader. His store is not in the village, but it has locality by being near the chapel. Originally a cabin attached to a bit of land, the widow, James's mother, made a depot in it for such articles as candles and snuff, salt and tobacco. The stock and the farm increased, and after a few saving years, the house was rebuilt. It stands on an eminence now—large, slated, conspicuous with whitewash. Scythes, ploughs, and harrows are shown outside the shop. Within there are the sacks of flour and sugar, bacon, boots, shirts, and travelling trunks. Mr Covey is reading over an order just received—" a sack of pollard, a pair of boots, a spraying machine, and a whitewash brush." Mr Covey has an agency from a shipping company—that is to say, he is emigration agent for the district. He is a young man with a bald forehead and blinking eyes. I am known to Mr Covey, and we shake hands. " Mr Covey, I saw your name in the papers as secretary to the local branch of the League. I have credentials, and I would be obliged if you would take me to a meeting in the district." Mr Covey speaks wavering words. " I'm sorry . . . I can't take you to the meeting . . . Don't belong to the League now . . . I've the post-

A COUNTRY SHOP.
(From a photograph.)

office. My brother is secretary to the League, but the names aren't changed yet." "I see, Mr Covey." I sit down by the counter, and we converse.

Since the beginning of his career James Covey has been associated with the Home Rule movement. I had seen his subscription to the party funds. "The Priests and People of Drumneen, per Mr James Covey." A branch of the Sinn Fein organisation had been founded in the neighbourhood, and this division has moved Mr Covey to send a message with the last subscription. "In forwarding our contribution, we wish to register our appreciation of these sterling patriots, justly styled the leaders of our race, who stood where Parnell did in their determination to win for our country a nation's rights." This message was purely an official utterance. When we came to the question of Home Rule, Mr Covey was unexpectedly cautious. "After all, now . . . would Home Rule make us better off?" The man with the blinking eyes and the wavering speech became representative of the real Conservative Ireland—of that Ireland which is so profoundly sceptical of revolutionary movements and revolutionary ideas. Behind him I saw farmers, ecclesiastics, officials, the Catholic Conservatives whose weight would make an Irish deliberative body the most conservative assembly in Europe.

It is the forenoon of the day, and business in the shop is slight. From the back we hear the sound and stir of farm life. James's mother comes into the shop. She lifts her head, and one sees a massive face, with living eyes. There is something in her face that recalls the look of an old priest, someone near

the sod, yet having authority. She is old but of enduring build, and the directing power is still in her gaze. She goes from the shop slowly and silently. The woman's life has succeeded. Her son has shop and farm; he is on the District Council; is chairman this year, and as such is a member of the County Council, and is eligible to sit with the magistrates. This man of cautious enterprise has many interests. A dairy society was established here by the agricultural organisation society, but its working was delayed through insufficiency of capital. James Covey put in enough money to purchase the machinery, but on the condition that the co-operative society should not extend its operations to a trade in eggs. He is on the committee of the dairy society. Recently there was talk of forming a co-operative credit society. The prospect fell through because James Covey, as interested in the local joint-stock bank, could not give it countenance.

This should be a prosperous period for the shopkeepers. In the country money has increased, and the shop-going habit has become more frequent. The farmers sell everything they produce, and buy everything they consume. They go to the shop for bread, butter, bacon, and in the same store they buy seeds and ready-made clothing. The organising talent and business capacity left in rural Ireland go into the shops, and, in a shabby country town, a name across a door may represent a large business in trading, farming, and hotel-keeping. Expenses are small, income is steady, there are many opportunities for petty investment, and so money accumulates. One often hears of a shopkeeper who can dower his

daughter with thousands, and of a trader's widow who can put an altar into a village chapel at a cost of many hundred pounds. In destitute districts of the West these accumulations are sometimes made in a disreputable way. The peasant is kept in the storekeeper's power through long credit, darkened accounts, usury. The trader who carries on such transactions goes by the name of a "gombeen man." Respectable shopkeepers will often advance the passage money to the son or daughter of a poor debtor, knowing that the earnings coming back to the emigrant's family will return to the shop.

I say good-bye to Mr Covey, and I take my departure. Walking back, I notice a mansion off the road. Like so many land-owners' houses, it stands derelict, and through the gateway a herd-boy is driving Mr Covey's cattle to graze on the demesne. The splendid trees look neglected, the garden has gone to waste, the laurels and rare shrubs make a sort of jungle. The stone-built house shows little sign of ruin, though in one of the upper windows a pane is broken. In the top corner of the window a swarm of bees has gathered. Outside the empty room the bees have made a changing cluster of jewels. Likely enough, James Covey's grandfather gave unremunerated labour to the building of this fine place. James Covey, the magistrate, might come to live in the mansion. But no. His cattle graze the demesne on the eleven months' system, and his chief concern with the place is by way of getting the grazing on favourable terms.

PART II

ABROAD IN BREFFNI

I

We had been shifting through the town for hours: the band had drawn us together, and now it paraded us into the market-square. The politicians, journalists, and local men of the movement, had their place upon the platform, and we were packed around. For three hours we had endured their speeches. Not we, but the band, had become impatient. Its leader went behind the platform and interviewed a young idealist who was about to speak. "The band is waiting," he said. The succeeding speaker received an ultimatum. "I'd advise you to get done with talking, for the band has something to do besides listening to speeches." This speaker was perturbed, and he made a hasty speech. To the disgust of the band, another speaker came forward. From him their spokesman got a reply that was like a lash across the face. He went on the platform, a well-dressed young man with a waxed moustache and a neat red tie, and in a moment we recognised him as one who could harden the emotion of the crowd. He dealt only with definite points, and he had a passion that never became oratorical. During his speech the band was preparing its coup. Simultaneously with the last word the signal was hoisted, and the demonstration, as regards human articulation, was over.

. . . . . .

The race distinction that made it wonderful for a

Planter's daughter to speak with one of the United Irishmen still lived in her face. She leaned from a window above a shop that had a Palatine name, and the band played the tune that went with the words :—

> " In came the Captain's daughter,
> The Captain of the yeos,
> Saying, ' Brave United Irishmen,
> Will ne'er again be foes.' "

At the other side of the street, standing at her door, was a young woman whose face and figure were typical of this part of the country. Her black hair was as heavy as the crown of a barbarian queen; her eyes were full and grey, her face reserved, but quickening into proud intelligence. The strings of shops were shuttered, for it was Sunday, and the people gathered at their windows or stood at their doorways. The stream of sunshine should have made for a Southern exuberance, but the crowd around the band was silent and unimpassioned.

Men and girls were selling fruit, and we got the good savour of apples. There were a few red-coated soldiers on the side walk. A beggar went round the skirts of the crowd, a boy with a twisted body, a yellow face and a begging lip that turned spiteful when one repulsed him. He had come down from Dublin in the excursion, and so had the Cockney mandoline-players, the brazen-faced girl, and her boy-comrade. A fair, handsome, smiling woman was in charge of a roulette table that was surrounded by people. Her banter was sometimes Rabelasian, and her vocabulary was always the vulgar English of the

towns. "Play on, gentlemen, I'm only here for a holiday, and all I want is a gob-warmer. Now, little girls, run home and milk the ducks. Here you are, young fellow, if I had only an egg I'd give you the shell. Don't leave the Red idle. Begorra! the yellow men are beating out the white." I had been speaking with a woman who was watching the scene with the admiration of a child. She was a poor woman who might have been kin with those who sung ballads in the street. "I'm going home to get tea for myself," she said. I asked her would it be trouble to give me tea. "No trouble," she said, "but my house is a poor house, and you won't like the inside of it." I said I would go with her if she would take money for the tea she gave me. She took a child up in her arms and led the way up a steep street. The house was poor indeed, and inside it was disordered as the nest of a jackdaw. She put the child on the floor and hung a kettle over a fire of sticks.

II

It was a lodging-house for the people of the road. Beggars, ballad-singers and tramp-musicians used to lie within the chimney nook or behind the wooden partition. That night a man, carrying a child, came in. The man was dressed in home-spuns, and he looked as if he had been at some sedentary employment. His face had the nervous excitement that one sees in the faces of subdued people when they break loose. The child was about six, and his face

might become the face of a cold reserved and brilliant man. I asked the elder if he had travelled far. "I'm starting back on a long journey," he said. "Myself and Manus the child went rambling. Last August we went from our own place in the County Monaghan. These are fine bright days. I think it will be a good year for the country. I think we'll be better off from this time, with the help of God." Later in the night I gave him my coat to wrap round Manus. The child went asleep. Then the man told me of his travels.

III

Michael Philibeen was his name, and he was a weaver. He had been reared in the County Cavan, but his father's place and his own place was in the County Monaghan. When he was young (about the age of Manus, he told me) his mother had some dispute with her husband, and, taking the child with her, she left him and came to her own people in this part of the country. "I found my mother's people different to the people in Monaghan," said Michael Philibeen. "They were fond of hunting and sporting, and music and stories. My uncle taught me to play the flute, and I soon could play it very well for my age. In two years my mother went back to my father's home, and I went with her. Then my father put me to the loom, and he began to teach me the trade he had got down from his father and from the fathers before him. I worked in the house; but I often longed for my uncle's house,

for the music at night, the fun, and the story-telling. I stole away when I was a lad, big enough to know better, and I went into the County Cavan. I became a strolling musician, playing along the roads on the flute, the one instrument I had power over. I used to play at cross-road dances, and in the house when there would be some festivity; but I was happiest when there was no gathering about me, when I would sit on a grassy ditch and play to myself. But of course I wouldn't be left to that life. My father sent for me again and again, but I refused to go back to the loom. My uncle came and advised me to go back to the shelter and the good trade. Then my mother came, and I craved her to let me go my own way. She told me that my father was getting old and wanted to see his son at the loom. I was heart-broken, I refused to go back. I kept to the roads, though I knew that I was not a rambler out and out, and I often used to think of the kindness of the settled life. I had set my father aside and would not listen to my mother, and maybe what fell on me afterwards was a judgment from God. Some sickness came on me, and my teeth dropped away, and so I lost power over the flute, the one instrument I could play.

"I went back to my father's country; he settled me down at the loom, and I kept to the business very steadily. My father had one trouble on his mind, and that was to find wife for me, a woman that would keep me to the loom when he would be gone. Well, he made a match for me after my mother died, and the match turned out well enough. Manus was the one child, and before he was born my father

had died, and he left the loom and the shelter to me and my wife.

"Year after year I worked on at the weaving, sitting in the house. I kept from the roads, and I would not let my mind be on the music. If anyone around asked me for a tune I would first shake my head. Sometimes, if I was in a house where music was getting played, I'd feel the heart within me become twisted, and I would have to get up and go out of the house. And there would be no sport nor company in my own house. My wife had no care for these things, indeed she only wanted to keep her hands busy. And now I'll tell you something about my woman, as you're not likely to meet her nor to carry the story further. Her people were very respectable, but they met with misfortune, and they were evicted from their own holding. My wife herself had to go to the workhouse for a while. Now, that was always on her mind, and she made it her devotion to make a good place for ourselves—a house that she could show to the friends who sometimes came to visit her. And so she was always working, and our little house and garden was not enough for the spirit that was in her. She worked abroad, washing in this house, sewing in that, weeding in this man's garden. And all the time I would be sitting at the loom, thinking things over, talking to myself, or to Manus, the child, who was beginning to grow up and to give a sort of heed to me. I talked so much about the County of Cavan that the child knew the place as well as myself. Manus made no friends, and me and him were all and all with each other. Well, last year I began to take

him about the country while his mother was abroad working. I would take him to the top of the hill or to the shore of the lake. I began to find my eyes for birds' nests, and no matter how thick the hedge I could show Manus the hedge-sparrow's nest; I could find him the lark's nest on the ground, or the robin's in an old shoe, or in a tin can. And I was beginning to feel that it wouldn't be such a desperate thing to go into the County Cavan and stay there for a while, for my child was growing up and his mother was in no way depending upon me. July came, and long before daybreak I'd find myself awake, and the child would be awake, too. Then Manus would talk to me about the County Cavan, and I promised the child I would go away before the weaving commenced and take him with me.

"Soon after my woman began to bring in the stuff for the weaving, and I had to put the first threads on the loom. That day Manus brought in the nest of a blackbird, and my heart was nearly broken when he left it down before me. I felt that the good of my life was going while I was putting in the threads. I talked to Manus, and in the end I told him that we would start on the journey next day. Then my wife came in; she had more stuff for the weaving, and she began to take the little pictures down off the wall, for she wanted to begin white-washing there and then, as she had heard some friends of hers were coming to the pattern, and they would be likely to visit her. Now, what she said about friends' visits gave me the opening for what I wanted to say, but my heart was beating so fast that I had to let the chance go by. Then

after a while I began to say how I had friends, too, and that I wanted to visit them. She didn't take that easy on account of all the stuff that was in the house for the weaving, but my mind was made up, and she had to give in to me. I told her I was taking Manus, and she said: 'Well, let you take the child with you, for he has your own temper, and he will never be bid by me.' Then she made provision for us, and sent up warm clothes for Manus, and in the morning we took to the road, leaving the yarn to be woven by Peter Martin, the travelling weaver, who used to stay in our house.

"We walked part of the way, and I carried Manus part of the way, and for part of the way we got lifts on the carts. We went over a good many miles on the first day. I had to tell Manus all about the woods, for ours is a bare country, and he only saw the trees by themselves. And when I told him about the squirrels he was in dread, for I told him of the way they get angry and let on to bark when they see us making a claim on the woods. I told him of the times we used to have in the bird-catching season, when I'd set my cage in the open field, and how my jewel of a singing bird would draw down the flocks about him. Ah! them were happy times for me, and it's no wonder I remembered them and could talk about them to Manus! The world hadn't made itself hard to me then. I could put the flute to my mouth and play when the cages were gathered up on the bank. And when I'd go home when 'twas dark, there was always the song or story by my uncle's fire. It was no wonder I remembered them days, and that my stories of them times could shorten

the road for Manus! An end came to the first day's rambling, and I asked for shelter at a house by the road. The woman made us welcome to the fire, but she had no bed to give us. I took down the reaping hook, and I went outside and cut the tops of the heather and brought in a bed for myself and Manus. The sweet-smelling tops of the heather! The best bed that a man ever lay upon.

"The crops didn't look well in our own country. The potatoes that were dug made us think of a poor prospect before us. But the prospect seemed blacker in the country that we were going into, for they seemed to have a heavier and more constant rain. It was a poor country, and we saw it in the falling rain; and that made the country more desolate. We didn't see any comfortable houses on the second day's journey; we saw wet hills with lone sheep climbing them, and we saw bogs with stretches of canavan, and all their white heads drooped in the rain. On a wet, dark night we came to a house. It was a poor little place, but we could go no further. They gave us a bed by the hearth, but their fire was only the wet sods and the bits of sticks. The children that sat round were white and quiet, and when we broke the cake we offered them a share. Shamefaced enough the children took the bread. When we were making a start in the morning the woman of the house came to us. 'Turn back,' she said, 'for there's misfortune on this country. The rain was constant on the ridges, and our little children will die of the hunger.' She followed us out on the road. 'Turn back,' she said, 'turn back.'

"We went on, but my heart was low enough, I

tell you, when I carried Manus in my arms, and saw how poor-looking were the children that we met along the roads. We were coming to the place of my mother's people, but how did I know whether the people there would not be poorer than the people we met, and how did I know whether there would be any comfort for Manus, or any welcome before us at all? Then we came to a place that I knew well, a green space with a cromlech in it and big stones around. It was there we used to have the dances in the old times. I gave Manus the shelter of the cromlech, and I sat beside him with very lonesome feelings. I remembered the dances there and how I used to make music for the couples, and I remembered a girl who used to sit beside me when I played, and who used to dance with me when I danced. It was no wonder that I was lonesome and dispirited, and without the courage to face the journey before me.

"We sat there by the stones for a while, Manus and myself watching the rain falling. The road was bare and empty for a time, and then we saw a lone woman, a traveller or a tramp, coming along. The woman came over to talk to us, and we found out that she was going to the country that we had left. She wasn't going by the road, but by a short way across the hills. She didn't know us at all, but all the same she had news for us. My wife's brother, a parish priest in America, had come back to Ireland on a visit. The woman had seen him in the place where she was last, and she knew that the priest was gone to visit at our home. 'He is a grand high-up man,' said the travelling-woman, 'and the house where he is does be filled up with money and

presents. He's staying with his sister for a week only, but the weaver's house will be worth going into while he's there. I'll be at Mrs Philibeen's to-morrow, for I know a short way across the hills.'

"'Will you go back?' said I to the child. 'The priest will have lovely things for you, and I don't think that there's any warmth or comfort before us.' 'No,' said Manus, 'we won't go back till the rise of the year.' I let the travelling-woman go, and I took Manus by the hand, and we went on towards the house that I knew. And Manus walked on so manfully that my own courage came back to me. We came to my uncle's house, and it was a happy story with us from that until the present minute. My uncle had no children of his own, and he and his woman were overjoyed to see Manus. And their turf was well saved, and they had the meal and the bacon. And we showed Manus the wood and the lake, the squirrel gathering up its store, and the crane rising out of the tufts, and the badger coming out of its hole. Then came the rise of the year, and Manus and myself made the start for home, well satisfied with ourselves, though indeed the kindly people weren't satisfied that we should go."

IV

Outside the town I came on three of the bad people of the Irish roads—on two men and a woman of the tinker tribe. The boss-tinker held up a cur by the back of the neck and offered to sell it to me. The other was chasing a young crow that had been dropped

out of the nest. When I looked back the first had taken up his bass and ash-plant and was walking a yard ahead of the miserable woman, his mate. The other was casting stones at the young jackdaws that had been discoursing amongst themselves in their habitations above the green branches of a lime tree. "What is the tinker's curse?" said I once to a knowledgable man. "I will tell you," said he. "Only myself knows it. He never goes under a roof. Here's what the tinker says when he passes by your house and mine:—

"'You build houses! ay, like the crows, you put stick and stick together.
May I see a scatter of sticks and the kites a-chase through the wood!
You live man and wife, you say, like the goats, two and two a-tether,
For fear ye would reach to the hedge-tops, and the wild taste get in your blood!'"

The roads are bare and empty and the country is hardly inhabited: along the Farnham estate there are few farm-houses and few signs of crops. I discover an Orange Lodge by the side of the road, and I remember that I am now amongst the Orange farmers. Now and then I hear an accent that reminds me of North-east Ulster, and sometimes I see a hard-featured type of face that is distinct from the Gaelic stock of Cavan. Yet, about here, many Orange families have Breffni clan-names such as Brady, Reilly, Rourk, Sheridan. But whether of the Planter breed or of the native stock, the Protestants hereabouts form a distinct population. This was a planted district, and the strife between the Pro-

testant settlers and the native Catholics has been an issue to the memory of the living. The people have a vivid tradition of the events that happened here during the war of the Catholic Confederation. The county is the pass to Connacht, and the fringe of the confiscated province of Ulster. . . . A Breffni Captain, back from Spain, rode this way once. The clansmen around him were shouting for a victory won, but the O'Rourk or the O'Reilly rode in silence, thinking how Owen Roe O'Neill would smite the Scots and check the English Puritans, and how, without artillery, the " undertaker " towns might be reduced. Later, stark upon his horse, an Irish scout galloped with the tidings that Owen Roe was dead in Lough Oughter Castle, near hand, and that the Saxon, Oliver Cromwell, was on Irish ground. An Irish Walter Scott would make this empty country full of memories. The people remember a man of their own who was a vigorous leader under Owen Roe O'Neill—Myles O'Reilly who was called " Myles the Slasher." They present Myles as if he had lived and died within their memory. Historical documents imply that when Cromwell ended the war, Myles O'Reilly took service with the King of Spain. He died here, and was waked here, say the people. They tell how the O'Reillys won back their own territory, but brought home Myles, their leader, dead. For three days and three nights they waked him in the O'Reilly stronghold with soldiers and clansmen, priests and musicians, beggars and keening women thronging round. If we had a Walter Scott he would make this tradition memorable.

This was a planted district, and consequently the

Catholics have bitter memories of confiscation and persecution. But between Protestants and Catholics no feud exists now. Protestants and Catholics form distinct populations. They will remain distinct for long, but when the question of Irish self-government is out of the way, the ditch that divides will be filled up or broken down—I do not know which happens to a ditch.

I am making my way by a peculiar edifice that is on a lump of a hill a long way off. This shell of a building is called "Fleming's Folly," by the people. There was a Captain Fleming, who, in dread of losing his estates, kept away from the Catholic muster. Sarsfield, say the people, rode up to Fleming's Castle. Captain Fleming was away, said the servant. Sarsfield was furious at the evasion. There was a marble table in the hall and he struck it with his sword, splitting the marble across. "Tell him," said he, "that Patrick Sarsfield came to Fleming's Castle."

That was during the Williamite wars. One could continue the story of the country through the great houses that I can see from the road. Fine avenues lead up to them, but the mansions are falling into ruin. These great houses were built at a cost of fourpence halfpenny per day, per man. Labour in men and horses was forced from the peasantry. Sometimes the building was helped by government subsidy, for these great mansions were administrative centres and barracks in disaffected districts. I know a deserted mansion where doors and window-shutters are painted to look like wood; they are of iron, and they have their port-holes. When their houses were built, the gentry had sold their parlia-

ment. What is their after history? They make "clearances" and arm Orange Lodges, they decline to impotence, and are presented with a "bonus." They drift away or take themselves out of the country. Some of these mansions are being made into educational establishments—the Agricultural College at Ballyhaise was a landowner's seat—and a few have been turned into convents. The greater number must go into the decay that soon overtakes the deserted house. The class that is succeeding the landlords do not want to pay cess on these mansions, and at present they would as lief live in the gate lodges.

Two peasants with a pair of greyhounds in leash came out of a forsaken avenue. I asked one of them who had owned the mansion. "O'Rourke, King of Breffni," said he, good-humouredly. "Did you not know that this is the place that Thomas Moore meant in the song, 'The Valley lay Smiling before Me?'" They went their way then. Later, I encountered them in a wayside public-house. "This is a fine dog," said I, patting one eager head. "I wouldn't say so," said the man who had spoken to me first. "But the other hound," said he, impressively, "was runner-up for the cup." They were coming from a coursing match: every year for forty years they had attended it. They had prolonged their boyhood these gentle good-humoured men: they were happy in their fellowship and happy in their possessions: they enjoyed their tramp across the hills, their refreshment on the wayside, their raillery of a pretentious outsider.

The tinkers were approaching when we left the

public-house—the man with the bass and ash-plant first, the woman dragging after him, and the unattached tinker following with the dog. They stood for a while in random consultation, then they moved inside. These tinkers did not seem to be loth to go under the roof of a public-house.

The Irish provincial papers are probably the worst written in any European language. The sheets are filled with reports of meetings of Boards of Guardians, and proceedings at petty sessions. Yet a good deal of national expression gets into a local paper such as I have in my hand. I see that at a meeting of a certain District Council, a letter in these terms was read. It was from a labourer complaining about a smoky chimney :—

" I have ripped open the back, belly, and side of this infernal chimney, and even put a coaxyorum on its summit, but, wonderful to relate, the smoke retreated hastily, made for the window, and would not even look at my coaxyorum.

" So great is the suction downwards that no lark can warble o'er, no jackdaw or jay can touch its summit, else they will get sucked down and cremated in this inferno.

> " ' I may break, I may shatter the house as I will,
> But the smell of the smoke will hang round it still.'

" The walls are in mourning, the ceiling the same, and my wardrobe, etc., saturated with the intolerable smell of smoke. I must tell you that I am a widower and mean to have another try in the matrimonial market and select a fair colleen, only I would be afraid I might be indicted for woman slaughter if

she got suffocated. But the two stone-hearted district councillors should be in the dock also, because they would not even look into the Black Hole of Calcutta—for it is nothing else."

It was decided to attend to this chimney.

When the tinkers passed me they were singing together, and they seemed happy enough. When I came upon them again the woman was crying. She called out to me, "O sir, sir, he has cut me, sir. Look, I'm bleeding." I spoke to her: the man hardly interested himself in the business. "She fell into a ditch," he said, without caring whether I accepted his statement or not. "He cut me with an ash-plant across the cheek. Look, I'm bleeding." Sure enough there was a red spot upon her cheek, and the man had an ash-plant in his hand. "If she had to keep sober she wouldn't have fallen into the ditch." He called to the dog, "Here, Guff, Guff—where's the dog gone to?" He was not interested in the complaints of the woman, but he was interested in finding the dog. We went along the road in a string, the three tinkers and myself. They were a scubby, undersized lot. The man with the bass had a certain rotundity and a certain prophecy of obtaining his satisfactions. The two men went off together, the unattached tinker now taking up the hunt for the dog. The woman sat by the roadside, crying to herself. She wore an ugly black cape and an ugly black straw hat. She sat for a while, miserable, with hanging mouth and tears upon her face. I came up with the other two again. "He struck me with his belt," the unattached tinker was saying. "Then I struck him and he

knocked me down. I called over the Hearseman to save me." "And what did he do?" said the other. "He knocked Mac down and I stepped on with Mac and hoisted him into the ditch. He had no coat on, and my waistcoat was pulled off without me taking off the coat. The back was pulled out of it. Then I let Mac through the ditches and bushes, and everywhere in the dark."

A company of engineers was passing to their wagons. The man with the bass took off his cap, made an obeisance, produced a broad-sheet and began to sing a ballad of farewell. The unattached tinker was equally business-like. He picked up Guff by the scruff of the neck and hawked him amongst the soldiers. The woman kept quiet so as not to embarrass the business. But the soldiers marched by. The man with the bass folded up the ballad-sheet and abruptly ceased his song. For a long stretch of the road I had them behind me; the two men whistling or talking of wayside fights, and the woman moaning again.

V

That evening I had an adventure with two members of the army of occupation, or, as some would prefer to call them, the army of no occupation, the Royal Irish Constabulary. Between the town of B—— and the village of C—— I came upon a brace of constables. They were lying in the ditch, smoking their pipes. As I passed I remembered that there was an inquiry in my mind that the patrol were

competent to answer. I determined to raise the question on our next meeting. Outside the town I met the children of my friends and turned back. We caught up a country woman who was carrying some packages and a heavy basket. The children helped her with the parcels, and I took possession of the basket. When we came to the police again I was one of a group of country people. They were still in the ditch. I turned to one with the query, "Would you tell me the meaning of a proclamation that I saw in Carrigallen last Tuesday?" Now, unawares, I was asking an invidious question, as this proclamation had reference to the withdrawal of extra police from the County Leitrim. "The meaning of the proclamation—would you like to know?" "Yes." "Why didn't you read it?" "I was too far away." "Then you can go to Hell." There was nothing to be done at the moment, so I lifted the basket and went on with my friends. Later I came on the patrol; they were leaning against the parapet of the railway bridge. "Your pardon, gentlemen," said I, "were you the constables I met a while ago?" "Would you like to know?" said one, and "What's that to you?" said the other. I asked for an apology for rudeness, but they said, "Go home now, or we'll throw you over the bridge." Their insolence came from the fact that they regarded the country people as Eastern officials regard the provincials. Such a woman sold porter illicitly; if her friends were uncivil to the constables they could show their power. So-and-so's children grazed a few cows along the side of the road; if their father raised his head there would be a case of technical

obstruction. I saw how easy it was for the Royal Irish Constabulary to fall into the insolence of Turkish officials.

Next morning I called at the barracks. The sergeant, good, easy man, was recovering from an attack of delirium tremens and was "shook" as the saying is. He asked the constables to apologise, but again they used the word "Hell." I might have communicated with the authorities had I not a prejudice against addressing myself to Dublin Castle.

. . . . . .

The Royal Irish Constabulary

The Royal Irish Constabulary are a force of 11,000 armed men, distributed through 1475 stations. They are not under local control, but are ordered directly from Dublin Castle. For their upkeep the Imperial power raises £1,400,000 in Ireland, an amount largely in excess of the grant for national education. In the main they are a rural force, but they are extended to the cities of Belfast, Cork, and Londonderry. In country places individual constables look bloated and patrols have an easy-going air. One comes to regard the Constabulary as a rural police with little to do. But let us go into Connemara and enter a police hut in a lonely place. The constables are probably idle and unbuttoned, but there are rifles and bayonets to hand, and the hut has the position of a blockhouse.

The life of Ireland has been forced back on the land, and the most powerful of Irish efforts has been directed to the liberation of the land in the interest

of the majority. Against all forms of agrarian agitation stand the Royal Irish Constabulary with their rifles and bayonets, their drill and revolver practice. Why does Murty Flynn join a force that stands against the interests and passions of his class ? There is the bribe of a livelihood, and the fundamental muddle of the human mind prevents him from seeing the conflict in clear terms. They tell of a constable who had to assist at the eviction of his father, and Murty himself knows of a recruit, sent down with an extra levy to the County Clare, who found himself guarding a rancher's cattle against his father's hazel stick. The direct conflict rarely occurs. Murty's father has four sons. One of them will inherit the farm, and another may obtain the means of getting some land. For the rest there is emigration or casual labour. Murty is not studious enough to become a teacher, nor has he enough application to succeed as a shopkeeper. He is a big, healthy lad, with a fair intelligence and a fondness for outdoor life. He offers himself to the Constabulary. There are many applications, but Murty obtains a place, and his people are as glad as if they had got two acres of land.

Constable Murty Flynn begins with a renumeration exceeding that of the assistant teacher in the local school. With twenty-one shillings a week, he has various allowances, and is lodged in the barrack at a slight charge. Promotion is almost inevitable, as there are 1859 sergeants and 451 acting-sergeants to 8380 constables. He is sure of a pension, and is under no necessity of saving. There are three Constabulary men in the station—

an easy-going sergeant with a wife and family, Murty Flynn, and another constable. His day is really idle. He goes on parade at 9 A.M., when there is elementary drill, then for a while the three sit in the station smoking, going over the rules of the Constabulary and the Acts of Parliament governing the action of the police. Two go on patrol at 11 A.M. —that is to say, they stroll through the country for a couple of hours. They attend the arrival and departure of the Dublin trains, secure the newspapers, and read them on their way back. There are more patrols in the evening, and each constable has to put in six hours per day in outdoor duty. Sometimes the constable has to collect statistics for the Department of Agriculture, and some writing has to be done. Murty Flynn is well content with the life. He knows in the force men who are good Irishmen, good Catholics, and good citizens. After seven years he can obtain permission to marry, and many good-looking girls would be glad to wed a man who can take them away from the hardship of the farm— a man of assured position, moreover, with a pension, who need not make himself anxious about a dowry. Murty's comrade intends to remain single for the next twenty years ; then he can retire with a pension of at least £42 per annum, when he intends to marry a girl with a dowry and set up a shop.

VI

The Fiddler at Home

I saw the fiddler in a little Cavan town; he was playing a rollicking tune known in that part of the country as "The Swallow's Tail"; he put the bow across the strings lingeringly, and his head went with the movement of his hand. The musician was a young man under forty, with a humorous but delicate face. He was lame. After "The Swallow's Tail" he struck up a fine tune, a tune that had in it depth, gaiety, and pride. The tune and the musician's way of playing it attracted me, and when I had an opportunity I talked with the fiddler. His name was Bartley Ryan, and we had some friends in common. Bartley was not really a man of the roads. He was a local musician settled in a house not far from the town. He asked me to visit him, and on a fine July evening I went to make my *celidh* in the musician's house. His house was on the rise of the country. A steep road went past the chapel and up to the few houses that neighboured Bartley's. Above the musician's one could have three counties in prospect—Cavan, Leitrim, Longford. One could look to the hills in Leitrim and to the Moat of Granard in Longford, and the great evening space of bog and field and lake was the Valley of Breffni, the scene celebrated in Moore's song "The Valley lay Smiling before Me." When I came down from the rise I found Bartley at his door and he brought me into the cabin, a one-roomed house with a window the size

of a dinner-plate. There was the hearth with stools about it, a bed in a recess of the wall, a larger bed at the other side, a table and chairs. The place had the narrowness of a rabbit-hutch, but the people were no more confined than the chickens in the nest. Beyond the threshold there was space enough.

Bartley's wife moved about to get supper for us; she was a silent, gaunt woman, and her size made the interior seem cramped. In the chimney recess sat another visitor; he rose up and welcomed me when I came in and then returned to his seat. There was a pipe in his mouth, his hat was at the back of his head, and he kept a tight grip on an ash-plant. He had been to the fair, and good spirits were in him. He was drunk, but very shrewdly drunk. He expressed himself in winks, nods, gestures, and made no audible remark until a cup of tea had dissipated the deadness of the drink within him. I remember him well, a tough old fellow, with what they call "the cordial eye." He kept a shrewd possession of his hat, his stick, and his tongue.

Bartley played over the tune that had attracted me, and again I enjoyed the inspired movement that had so much gaiety and so much pride. He knew the tune as "The Royal Blackbird."

While the fiddle was playing a young girl stole in and seated herself on the bed. She was the fiddler's child, a girl of sixteen, and she remained shy and aloof. I do not know if Bridget had good looks, but she brought with her a part of beauty, a grace that was like the grace of a fawn or some other wild, ungrown thing.

In his childhood Bartley had been lamed by an

accident. His people followed the business of the road, dealing in eggs and fowl, and for a while the lame youth followed the trade, but he was never a success in the business of buying and selling. They say that at one time he had a pony and car on the road, but the destiny that makes a poet by spoiling a bread-winner kept up with Bartley. His horse became disabled and his capital disappeared. Then he took out his fiddle and played at the markets. He makes money by his fiddle, playing sometimes in the towns and sometimes at weddings and festivities. He is well liked for his music and for his gentle and humorous nature. I was told that one of the farmers paid in Bartley's rent with his own. This seemed to me an incredible piece of altruism on the part of an Irish farmer, but I was assured of the fact. Bartley's rent is very little, and might not be missed by a farmer in good circumstances. And who is Bartley's patron? He is none other than the man who sat in the chimney recess the night of my visit, our friend with the implicating eye-lid and the tight grip on the stick.

Bartley's wife gave us tea, and afterwards we talked of the traditions of the place. I was anxious to get traces of a poet of the locality, a man named MacBrady, who wrote in Irish about a century ago. Bartley had heard of MacBrady, but for a full account of the poet he referred me to the man in the chimney recess. "I'll tell you about MacBrady," said our friend, who was now articulate. He took the pipe out of his mouth and made this statement. Bartley had heard it before, but he followed the narrative with the deepest interest.

"The house I'm living in now was a public-house in my grandfather's time. When my father was a little fellow the poet came into the house. He called for two quarts of whisky (whisky was cheap then). He filled the first quart into a noggin and mixed oaten meal with it. Made porridge of it and ate it with a spoon. Then he drank the other quart. He made the poem after that."

"There you are now," said Bartley. "He made the poem after that."

"I had that from them who knew," added my informant with a strong conviction of the importance of his information.

"Do you know anything of the poem?"

"Divil a bit of me knows."

Some more tunes were played for me and then I went away. I remember the people as gentle, kindly, and friendly, and I remember the little cabin as one of the most charming houses I was ever in.

VII

Bartley Mulstay is a poet: therefore in the opinion of the country he is a person to be conciliated. Here they have the old story-teller's conception of the man of words: he is a satirist primarily and his effusions inspired by hatred and contempt can inflict positive injury. A man named Hamilton who lived near the place had the reputation for keeping a good glass of whisky for the carters who came to his place. Bartley called, and, in accordance

with the privileges of the poets, he demanded refreshment. The servant, not knowing the man, handed him a mug of buttermilk. He drank it and went down the road highly incensed. Now Hamilton was writing in his office; he saw the poet pass and he guessed the disaster. "What did you give that man?" said he to the servant. "Buttermilk," said she. "Oh, murder," said Hamilton, "we're all destroyed." He took the bottle and glass in his hand and ran after Bartley. "I won't take it," said the unrelenting poet. "I'll take nothing from you until I've put out what's in my mouth." "Don't put it out," said Hamilton. "I must put out what's in my mouth to say." "Put it out then, but don't let it be of much harm to me." Thereupon Bartley said the rann "before he had put the garlic into it." He never told it to the people because he did not want it remembered, and, until Hamilton died, he and Bartley were friends.

I was to spend the night in Bartley's, and the next day the poet himself was to accompany me to the market of Clooney. I remember that a white calf of a day old was on the floor when I went into his house, and that a black-eyed girl, Bartley's daughter, was seated in the chimney corner, a fiddle in her hands. Bartley's wife, an easy fat and placid woman, came down from the sleeping-room that was aloft and welcomed me. Bartley seated in his backed chair was somewhat reserved. When he broke silence he was more inclined to talk of politics and philosophy than of poetry. He had been shown a book in which it was written that everything that happened, to the smoking of a pipe, was ordained

and laid down for a man. He intimated that he would give many volumes of the lives of the saints to possess that book. "Julia would read it for me," said he, "for lately I'm indisposed for reading." Bartley was really illiterate, but he was not proud of that distinction. The people say that when the statement about their land purchase came, Bartley got told of it, and had it read to him. Then, with the document in his hand he announced its contents to the people. They say that he delivered the terms correctly although he held the paper upside down. I found that Bartley was pessimistic about Home Rule. He maintained that Ireland could never succeed because of her treatment of Parnell—a man, he said, who was mentioned in the prophecies. O'Connell, too, was in the prophecies, for was it not said of him :—

> "This is Daniel O'Connell the great Liberator,
> The descendant of Gaedhal of the Scythian line ;
> The Chronicles of Fame his worth have recorded,
> From earliest history down to the present time."

To the English Government Bartley Mulstay would say two lines that were given in the Ancient Books :—

> "At the Battle of Aughrim you brought away our bone,
> You took the marrow out of it, but we want the scrapings home."

An admirable résumé of the Financial Relations between Ireland and Great Britain !

We came to poetry and romance in this way. I used the phrase "dangerous Breffni" ; and "Is that in the books ? " Bartley asked. I said that "Breffne Baoghlaigh," "dangerous Breffni," is used in an Ossianic ballad, that is, in a poem about Finn Mac-

A SUMMER NIGHT IN BALLYCASTLE.
(From an oil sketch by Jack B. Yeats.)

Cumhal. Bartley said that he disremembered (he could never have known) that particular poem. He asked me for the story. Now the story related in that terse ballad is involved and I could not well remember it, but, as it happened, I had in my pocket an early edition of MacPherson's "Ossian's Poems translated by James MacPherson, Esq., with critical Dissertations on the Poems of Ossian and on the Æra of Ossian." I had bought it off a Dublin book-barrow for the amusement of reading the symmetrical pseudo-history that was set forth in lengthy prefaces. Now I rejoiced in my possession of "Ossian's Poems," for here was an opportunity of bringing MacPherson's apocrypha to those who had lately been the custodians of the Ossianic tales and poems. After this, I thought, some traveller will find amongst the Midland peasantry the tale of Fingal. But interest in MacPherson is dead, and the discovery will create no controversy. However, a fit audience was before me, and a famous book was in my hand. I began. The misty figures and the voluminous rhetoric are very different from the terse and vivid poetry of the original documents.[1]

MacPherson's is eighteenth-century oratory. But eighteenth-century oratory was just the stuff for my audience. "It was then that Gaul, the Son of Morni,[2] stood like a rock in the night. His spear is glittering to the stars; his voice like many streams. 'Son of the battle,' cried the Chief, 'O Fingal, King

[1] See "Dunaire Finn," the "Poem book of Finn," in the Irish Text Society's publications.

[2] Goll, son of Morna, Bartley knew this name, but he did not recognise Finn MacCumhal as Fingal.

of Shells! let the bards of many songs soothe Erin's friends to rest. And, Fingal, sheath thy sword of death, and let thy people fight. We wither away without our fame, for our king is the only breaker of shields. When morning rises on our hills, behold at a distance our deeds. Let Lochlin feel the sword of Morni's son, that bards may sing of me. Such was the custom heretofore of Fingal's noble race. Such was thine own, thou King of swords in battles of the spear.'"

A young man who had a sack across his back had come into the house. Beside the dresser and in the shadow he and Julia stood. "'O Son of Morni,' Fingal replied, "I glory in thy fame. Fight; but my spear shall be near to aid thee in the midst of danger. Raise, raise the voice, sons of the song, and lull me into rest. Here will Fingal lie amidst the wind of night. And if thou, Agandecca, art near, among the children of thy land, if thou sittest on a blast of wind among the high-shrouded masts of Lochlin, come to my dreams, my fair one, and show thy bright face to my soul.'"

"It's the best I ever heard," said Bartley. "It is, in truth," said the young man. "But is there nothing in it about the young women," said Julia. I looked for a phrase. "Deugala was the spouse of Cairbar, Chief of the plains of Ullin. She was covered with the light of beauty, but her heart was the house of pride." "That's what the lads do be saying about Julia," said the young man. "Often have I fought, and often won at the battle of the spears. But blind, and tearful and forlorn, I now walk with little men. O Fingal, with thy race of battle, I

now behold thee not. The wild roes feed upon the green tomb of the mighty king of Morven! Blest be thy soul, thou king of swords, thou most renowned on the Hills of Cona." "Amen to that," said Bartley, "blind and forlorn he walks with mean little men." "It's my own case, bedad. Phil, you might bring out what you have in the bag." Now, one of the things that was in Phil's bag was a small jar. Its contents were poteen, they told me. I took a dram out of a cup, and I heard myself repeat :—

> "The milk and the ale are drunk every drop,
> And a dram won't stop our thirst this night."

"There's many's the good poem in the book that came out of," said I.

> "Come, Son of my Soul, and drain the cup,
> You'll get no sup when this life is past."

"Yes," said I, "it's a good song that I'm saying. It goes like this :—

> 'The yellow bittern that never broke out
> In a drinking bout might as well get drunk.
> For his bones are thrown on a barren stone,
> Where he lived alone like a hermit monk.'"

"Bartley Mulstay," said I, "you're a satirist. I know your ranns. Do you remember the person who lived near my grandfather's, the man who was so proud of his apple garden? He brought you through it one day, but he never offered you any of its produce; and when he turned you out on the road, he locked the gate behind you. You have made that man to be remembered," said I.

> " O grief that Ned in Eden did not stand,
> He'd hinder Eve to break the Lord's command;
> If the Tree of Knowledge was watched like these,
> Each man might live in peace and die at ease."

Isn't that it, Bartley Mulstay? Then there was the epitaph you made for that old hedonist Flavian Ward. When the new parish priest saw the inscription upon the tombstone, he ordered a mason to cut it away. But the clan of the Wards resisted the revisers, and your inscription remains to this day. I've seen it myself, Bartley Mulstay.

" But, Bartley, my man," said I, " we fear that you have been intimidated by the trouble made about old Flavian's tombstone. Else why have you put such a conventional sentiment into your own epitaph. It's known to the people, and, believe me, Bartley," said I, " it doesn't do your life sufficient credit:

> " Remember, man, as you pass by,
> As you are now, so once was I.
> As I am now, so will you be
> Prepare for death and follow me."

" I looked for something more striking, Bartley," said I.

The woman of the house bade us good-night and went aloft. " It's a rabbit's rest she'll have," said Bartley, " for in a while she'll have to put us on the road for Clooney." " We'll keep the talk up until she comes back," said I. " I can repeat poems against any man in Breffni. And, Bartley Mulstay," said I, " you'll have to tell us the rann you made upon the black-mouthed man of the Hamiltons." " No," said Bartley, " there's a promise I made at

confession—not to tell that rann to any but the man that can put a poem of his own composing beside." "Then," said I, "we'll hear the rann, for, like Finn, I can prove my poetry." Thereupon I recited a ballad. There was alloy in the metal I tendered. The ballad was not altogether my own. I had made it up out of the remains of a political song that was known a generation ago in another county. My effort had a striking success. When it was finished, and when congratulations were over, Bartley sat cogitating for a while. Then said he to the young man, "Phil, are you doing any courtin' these times?" "Phil and me's going out to look at the cow," said Julia. She put the shawl across her head and went out of the door: Phil stepped after her. "After I composed the rann," said Bartley Mulstay, "I made a song praising Hamilton. That drew the venom out of it." He sat still for a while. Then he held up a shut fist to the beam of his roof, and, like a man taking the oath, he repeated the rann:—

> "May a messenger come from the high place of God,
> To bear up your soul to a throne—
> But a robber be robbing him on his way back,
> And your fall be as dead as a stone.
>
> May your tables be laden with gold and with jewels,
> And your hands be upon them for proof,
> When the Devil whips in by your beggarly door,
> And tears your red soul through the roof."

"It didn't do him any harm," said Bartley, "no harm at all. That was on account of the mildness and goodness I put in the other rann, and because I kept it from the mouths of his enemies."

The others, when they came in, asked me to repeat my ballad. I recited it again. Then they all questioned me about the personages who were figured as birds. "The Kerry Cock," was, of course, O'Connell. But who were the others—the blackbird, the hawk, the wild-duck, the lark. They were the offspring of my invention: they were in the air like the birds themselves: I could not reduce them to newspaper fact. Nevertheless I ransacked my historical memory, and in the end I constructed a consistent comment. Phil said that the ballad should be upon the roads. Bartley Mulstay said that he would stand with his bare feet in the snow to hear it sung. He said he would teach it to the ballad-singers. Maybe he did. But I feel bound to confess that I have never heard it upon the roads. And now I shall set it here, my one contribution to the popular literature of my county.

VIII

The Birds that left the Cage

It is not my intention to disturb the public peace,
But I wish to sing about some birds that's in a certain place:
Find them out if you can; they are neither fools nor knaves,
But birds that's at their liberty, that scorn to be slaves.

And we're all singing,
Our cause triumphant springing,
Our ears with peace are ringing,
Since my birds they left the Cage.

I mean to tell their titles, but their names I won't explain :
They feed upon no corn, but what's of the true grain :
They won't be caught by chaff nor by salt upon the tail,
Nor frightened by a clappers, and their notes will never fail.

And we're all singing,
Our cause triumphant springing,
Our ears with peace are ringing,
Since my birds they left the Cage.

The first of my birds is the leader of the flock,
His voice is full of clangour, for he is my Kerry cock.
O, many is the dung-hill my cock has trodden down,
And when he claps his wings it's with fear he makes them frown.

And we're all singing,
Our cause triumphant springing,
Our ears with peace are ringing,
Since my birds they left the Cage.

There's another in the tribe, and of him I'll say a word :
He's known where he flies for my true and brave blackbird ;

His nest is strong and wide, and it's plain for all to see
His youngsters soon are flushed and their cry is "Liberty."

And we're all singing,
Our cause triumphant springing,
Our ears with peace are ringing,
Since my birds they left the Cage.

I have another bird: he has neither song nor call,
But when he takes his flight, he puts silence on them all.
In the middle of the wood, you will hear them scream and cry
When my hawk upon the bough shows his young to pounce and fly.

And we're all singing,
Our cause triumphant springing,
Our ears with peace are ringing,
Since my birds they left the Cage.

There's another of them loose: he has for his domain
The lakes and skies of Ireland and Ireland round again.
He is my wild-duck free, and no fox can snatch at him.
For he's a wary bird, and he can both dive and swim.

And we're all singing,
Our cause triumphant springing,
Our ears with peace are ringing,
Since my birds they left the Cage.

I have another bird: they don't like him on the wing,
For when he rises up in song he's sure to sing:
And now my bully-boys, give your voices to the lark,
He loves the sod of Erinn and he strives against the dark.

And we're all singing,
Our cause triumphant springing,
Our ears with peace are ringing,
Since my birds they left the Cage.

IX

It was about horses, women, and music, and, in the mouth of Maelshaughlinn, the narrative had the exuberance of the fair and the colour of a unique exploit. I found Maelshaughlinn alone in the house in the grey dawn succeeding his adventure. "This morning," he said, "I'm the lonesome poor fellow without father or mother, a girl's promise, nor my own little horse." He closed the door against a reproachful sunrise, and, sitting on a little three-legged stool, he told me the story.

Penitentially he began it, but he expanded with the swelling narrative. "This time last week," said Maelshaughlinn, "I had no thought of parting with my own little horse. The English wanted beasts for a war, and the farmers about here were coining money out of horseflesh. It seemed that the buyers were under a pledge not to refuse any-

thing in the shape of a horse, and so the farmers made horses out of the sweepings of the knackers' yards, and took horses out of ha'penny lucky-bags and sold them to the English. Yesterday morning I took out my own little beast and faced for Arvach fair. I met the dealer on the road. He was an Englishman, and, above all nations on the face of the earth, the English are the easiest to deal with in regard of horses. I tendered him the price—it was an honest price, but none of our own people would have taken the offer in any reasonable way. An Irishman would have cursed into his hat, so that he might shake the curses out over my head. The Englishman took on to consider it, and my heart went threshing my ribs. Then he gave me my price, paid me in hard, weighty, golden sovereigns, and went away, taking the little horse with him.

"I sat down on the side of a ditch to take a breath. Now you'll say that I ought to have gone back to the work, and I'll say that I agree with you. But no man can be wise at all times. Anyway, I was sitting on a ditch, with a lark singing over every foot of ground, and nothing before me but the glory of the day. A girl came along the road, and, on my soul, I never saw a girl walking so finely. 'She'll be a head above every girl in the fair," said I, 'and may God keep the brightness on her head.' 'God save you, Maelshaughlinn,' said the girl. 'God save you, my jewel,' said I. I stood up to look after her, for a fine woman walking finely is above all the sights that man ever saw. Then a few lads passed, whistling and swinging their sticks. 'God give you a good day,' said the lads. 'God give you luck, boys,' said

I. And there was I, swinging my stick after the lads, and heading for the fair.

" ' Never go into a fair where you've no business.' That's an oul' saying and a wise saying, but never forget that neither man nor immortal can be wise at all times. Satan fell from Heaven, Adam was cast out of Paradise, and even your uncle broke his pledge.

" When I came into the fair there was a fiddler playing behind a tinker's cart. I had a shilling to spend in the town, and so I went into Flynn's and asked for a cordial. A few most respectable men came in then, and I asked them to take a treat from me. Well, one drank and another drank, and then Rose Heffernan came into the shop with her brother. Young Heffernan sent the glasses round, and then I asked Rose to take a glass of wine, and I put down a sovereign on the counter. The fiddler was coming down the street, and I sent a young lad out to him with silver. I stood for a while talking with Rose, and I heard the word go round the shop concerning myself. It was soon settled that I had got a legacy. The people there never heard of any legacies except American legacies, and so they put my fortune down to an uncle who had died, they thought, in the States. Now I didn't want Rose to think that my money was a common legacy out of the States, so by half-words I gave them to understand that I had got my fortune out of Mexico. Mind you, I wasn't far out when I spoke of Mexico, for I had a grand-uncle who went out there, and his picture is in the house this present minute.

" Well, after the talk of a Mexican legacy went round, I couldn't take any treats from the people,

and I asked everyone to drink again. I think the crowds of the world stood before Flynn's counter. A big Connachtman held up a Mexican dollar, and I took it out of his hand and gave it to Rose Heffernan. I paid him for it, too, and it comes into my mind now that I paid him for it twice.

"There's not, on the track of the sun, a place to come near Arvach on the day of a fair. A man came along leading a black horse, and the size of the horse and the eyes of the horse would terrify you. There was a drift of sheep going by, and the fleece of each was worth gold. There were tinkers with their carts of shining tins, as ugly and quarrelsome fellows as ever beat each other to death in a ditch, and there were the powerful men, with the tight mouths, and the eyes that could judge a beast, and the dark handsome women from the mountains. To crown all, a piper came into the town by the other end, and his music was enough to put the blood like a mill-race through your heart. The music of the piper, I think, would have made the beasts walk out of the fair on their hind legs, if the music of the fiddler didn't charm them to be still. Grace Kennedy and Sheela Molloy were on the road, and Rose Heffernan was talking to them. Grace Kennedy has the best wit and the best discourse of any woman within the four seas, and she said to the other girls as I came up, 'Faith, girls, the good of the mission will be gone from us since Maelshaughlinn came into the fair, for the young women must be talking about him coming home from the sermon.' Sheela Molloy has the softest hair and the softest eyes of anything you ever saw. She's a growing girl with a spice of

the devil in her. 'It's not the best manners,' said I, 'to treat girls to a glass across the counter, but come into a shop,' said I, 'and let me pay for your fancy.' Well, I persuaded them to come into a shop, and I got the girls to make Sheela ask for a net for her hair. They don't sell these nets less than by the dozen, so I bought a dozen nets for Sheela's hair. I bought ear-rings and brooches, dream-books and fortune-books, buckles and combs, and I thought I had spent no more money than I'd thank you for picking up off the floor. A tinker woman came in and offered to tell the girls their fortunes, and I had to cross her hand with silver.

"I came out on the street after that, and took a few turns through the fair. The noise and the crowd were getting on my mind, and I couldn't think with any satisfaction, so I went into Mrs Molloy's, and sat for a while in the snug. I had peace and quiet there, and I began to plan out what I would do with my money. I had a notion of going into Clooney on Tuesday, and buying a few sheep to put on my little fields, and of taking a good craftsman home from the fair, a man who could put the fine thatch on my little house. I made up my mind to have the doors and windows shining with paint, to plant a few trees before the door, and to have a growing calf going before the house. In a while, I thought, I could have another little horse to be my comfort and my consolation. I wasn't drinking anything heavier than ginger ale, so I thought the whole thing out quietly. After a while I got up, bid good-bye to Mrs Molloy, and stood at the door to watch the fair.

"There was a man just before me with the pea and

thimble, and I never saw a trick-of-the-loop with less sense of the game. He was winning money right and left, but that was because the young fellows were before him like motherless calves. Just to expose the man I put down a few pence on the board. In a short time I had fleeced my showman. He took up his board and went away, leaving me shillings the winner.

"I stood on the edge of the pavement wondering what I could do that would be the beating of the things I had done already. By this time the fiddler and the piper were drawing nigh to each other, and there was a musician to the right of me, and a musician to the left of me. I sent silver to each, and told them to cease playing as I had something to say. I got up on a cart and shook my hat to get silence. I said, 'I'm going to bid the musicians play in the market square, and the man who gets the best worth out of his instrument will get a prize from me.' The words were no sooner out of my mouth than men, women, and children made for the market square like two-year olds let loose.

"You'd like the looks of the fiddler, but the piper was a black a'vis'd fellow that kept a troop of tinkers about him. It was the piper who said, 'Master, what's the prize to be?' Before I had time to think the fiddler was up and talking. 'He's of the oul' ancient race,' said the fiddler, 'and he'll give the prizes that the Irish nobility gave to the musicians—a calf, the finest calf in the fair, a white calf, with skin as soft as the fine mist on the ground, a calf that gentle that the smoothest field under him would look as rough as a bog.' And the fiddler was that lifted out

of himself that he nearly leapt over a cart. Somebody pushed in a young calf, and then I sat down on a stone, for there was no use in saying anything or trying to hear anything after that. The fiddler played first, and I was nearly taken out of my trouble when I heard him, for he was a real man of art, and he played as if he were playing before a king, with the light of Heaven on his face. The piper was spending his silver on the tinkers, and they were all deep in drink when he began to play. At the first sound of the pipes an old tinker-woman fell into a trance. It was powerful, but the men had to tie him up with a straw rope, else the horses would have kicked the slates off the market-house roof. Nobody was quiet after that. There was a thousand men before me offering to sell me ten thousand calves, each calf whiter than the one before. There was one party round the fiddler and another party round the piper. I think it was the fiddler that won ; anyway, he had the strongest backing, for they hoisted the calf on to a cart, and they put the fiddler beside it, and the two of them would have got out of the crowd, only the tinkers cut the traces of the yoke. I was saved by a few hardy men, who carried me through the market-house and into Flynn's by a back way, and there I paid for the calf.

" When I came out of Flynn's the people were going home quiet enough. I got a lift on Fardorougha's yoke, and everybody, I think, wanted me to come to Clooney on Tuesday next. I think I'd have got out of Arvach with safety, only a dead-drunk tinker wakened up and knew me, and he gave a yell that brought the piper hot-foot after me. First

of all the piper cursed me. He had a bad tongue, and he put on me the blackest, bitterest curses you ever heard in your life. Then he lifted up the pipes, and he gave a blast that went through me like a spear of ice.

"The man that sold me the calf gave me a luck-penny back, and that's all the money I brought out of Arvach fair.

"Never go into the fair where you have no business."

X

I am with big farmers and district councillors. Four of them sat near me: we are in Clooney, in the house kept by Marcus O'Driscoll, and in the room reserved for select people. I sat watching the street for sight of Bartley Mulstay who had gone through the market on a secret mission. The four who were farmers and district councillors were at a table between me and the window. One was a pachydermatous man, who talked continuously, bearing down the others by weight of a heavy body and a self-centred mind. His face had been cleared by a semi-circular sweep of the razor, but there was aftergrowth and stubble and outlying fences. Next to him was a farmer who had the full beard of a Boer general. At the head of the table was a short-nosed man, who had a quiet voice, and opposite the pachydermatous man, and bearing the weight of his argument, was a serious-minded young farmer who had a pale forehead and brick-coloured hair. "Wool is up," said the

short-nosed man. The pachydermatous one bore down on him.

"Indeed it's not up."

"There seems to be a shade of improvement. Unwashed wool at elevenpence a pound."

"That's less than the rise of a farthing in the pound. That's nothing."

"Well, I seemed to get the price more freely."

"You only thought so. Cattle is down ten shillings a hundredweight. Six pounds a head less than last year. We'll be all in the poorhouse. I've bespoken my place. I'm first, I tell you." He had the habit of recurring to his thought and expression again and again. This gave the impression that there was power and significance in everything he said. "Did you read my letter in *The Banner*?"

"I saw it," said the serious young man.

"I tell you it's great," said the pachydermatous man. "It's the best they ever got. 'With lamentations I write and send one and sixpence to the testimonial to my early friend, my intermediate friend, and my late friend, my friend in need and my friend indeed—the intrepid ideal gladiator of our country who now lies incarcerated in a prison cell, for the pure love of his constituency, and who is ready to reach the arm of friendship to his enemies, and fight their battle if they only say they will ascend the pedestal of justice. Oh, who could be his councillor! And what recompense shall be made him, save his own counsel and soliloquy who came by predestination to be the pulveriser of ignominious and pusillanimous land monopolists who stand the danger of taking the d—— at the back of the great indomitable,

defiable, and indefatigable 'F. W.'s' drumstick. Hoping that future happiness will give future history, good and better things to record in favour of the great liberator. I am, with deference, his, yours, etc.'

"*P.S.*—Please file my lines that my friend may see.'"

He was hugely delighted with this horseplay of language. When he had read the communication, he thrust his head out of the window, and illustrated before our humanity an enormous dorsal area. "I used to smoke cigarettes," said the young farmer, "but I found that they did not help me in buying or selling, so I smoked no more." The pachydermatous one came into the conversation, causing, as it were, a thousand-tons displacement.

"I'll tell you something about myself. I wouldn't smoke a cigarette—nor a cigar. If you gave me a sixpenny cigar I'd smoke it, and after that I'd fill my pipe and burn six ounces of tobacco."

"It's too much," said the short-nosed man.

"You do wrong," said the heavily-bearded farmer.

"It wouldn't be good for you," said the serious young farmer.

"No constitution could stand it," said the victim. "I'll tell you what I do. When I go to bed I smoke a full ounce of tobacco. I leave the pipe on the chimbley-piece to light before I get up." "Yes," said he, "I'm killing myself. I know it." He appealed to the serious young man. "James," said he, "you often saw me at the fair at five o'clock in the morning with a pipe in my mouth."

"Indeed I've seen it."

"At five o'clock in the morning, mind. And I'd as lief have it as my breakfast. Are you going, men? Get me a couple of men that would do ditching for me."

"Ditching's heavy work at this time of the year," said the serious young man.

"'Twould drag the hearts out of men to have them working in ditches with the soil sticking to their shovels," said the heavily-bearded man.

"I want to put the place right before I go to the poorhouse. Send me the men, and I'll feed them.

> "Fasting and prayers are good for the sinner,
> But the man at work has need of his dinner."

The others went out. He who I have named pachydermatous stuck his head out of the window and went on burning his six ounces of tobacco. When he turned in, a genteel dame was seated at the table. She wore the sort of shawl that goes with mittens and a smell of lavender. How did it come that she was in Clooney on a market day? I could swear that she was from New England, and that her ancestors had gone out with *The Mayflower*.

"Any objection, ma'am, to smoking?"

She babbled without any stops. "Not if the tobacco is good. My father always smoked Virginian tobacco, and my mother began to smoke too after being years with him—not a pipe, for that would not be considered ladylike in our locality, but a seegar." He thrust out his lower lip, snorted, and turned his back on her. It was the sneer of a bull. Then came in a large woman, clothed in black, with round and frightened eyes. A depressed man was with her.

She had just identified him in the street. They were friends, but had not met for years. She looked as if she kept a shop in a prosperous town. The man might have been an auctioneer or a clerk in a solicitor's office.

"So you buried your grannie?" she said.

"Three months ago. We had the announcement in all the papers."

"And what about Sara?"

"Sara's in England. She got burnt—an oil stove. It's not known whether she's marked for life. Michael can't travel on account of his heart. When I was going to Glasgow he came to the train to see me. He's white. He'll be handing in his gun soon."

"Do you hear anything from Dunn's now?"

"I wrote to them when they got the legacy, and I had one letter."

"I hear they aren't a bit better off than they used to be."

"A mare kicked and broke two of her hind legs. The bog used to be some good to them. But the landlord has set the bog to the tenants."

"And Gracie—any sign?"

"Divil a sign. And she's not young now."

"I hear James is sick."

"He's always sick. The poor man is only there."

"What else was I going to ask you. Did Daniel give much of a fortune with Kate?"

"No. Not nearly as much as was reported."

"And how is your own people—Owen, Henry, Sis."

Then our host, Marcus O'Driscoll, came up to me. I took it upon myself to say that there was a bad price for cattle.

"Them Dutch countries are under-selling us all," said he. "There's a district councillor gone out, and I told him last October that he would get no more than what he paid for them."

"Where did he buy?" said I.

"In the town of Ballina, and from a man who came from near Foxford.

In my mind's eye I saw the country round Foxford with its stretches of water and its water-logged fields.

"They didn't get much to eat near Foxford," said I.

"They got plenty to drink," said Marcus O'Driscoll. He permitted himself to be humorous. "There's a deal of water round Lough Coun."

"You were in Mayo then," said I.

"I was," said he. "At that time I was dealing in the produce of our rivers."

"Salmon," said I. He nodded gravely. I went on to talk of the salmon of the Blackwater.

"I'll tell you something," said Marcus O'Driscoll. I felt that a secret was being imparted to me. "I know a man who is paying fifty pounds for a mile of the Blackwater, and be it known to you it's not worth my pipe." I mentioned the Shannon at Castleconnell. "Not a dozen salmon will be taken between Castleconnell and Athlone this year," said he. "I could tell you a river that has more salmon in it than all the rivers of Ireland put together. And, furthermore, I could tell you why the salmon has forsaken the other rivers of Ireland."

But my friend Farral Gilroy came up to us. Marcus O'Driscoll saluted him. Then he went away.

"There goes a wise man," said I. "He knows

the cattle on the ridge of the hills and the salmon swimming against the rivers. And he can tell me why the salmon has forsaken the noble streams of Erinn."

Farral Gilroy moved me out. "If you eat a beef-steak with me," said he, "I'll tell you a story about Marcus O'Driscoll."

XI

He began in this way. He said, "Martin Fallon, my uncle, is the brother of Hugh Fallon, the grazier. You probably know Martin Fallon: a strong farmer, and a man of cows. I have known my uncle for twenty-five years. In the course of a quarter of a century I have seen only one variation in my uncle's appearance. To all appearance his clothes are always the same clothes, and his beard is always in the same stage of growth. You have seen him at the fair, and you will have noticed that he always carries the same ash-plant, that his coat is always of the same blue-black material, that his waistcoat is of corduroy, that it is sleeved, and that his trousers are of corduroy also. One morning lately I awakened in my uncle's house in Aughnalee. As my faculties were slowly flowing back to me the door opened, and my uncle entered the room softly. He was translated. First of all, he was dressed for the road. He carried a stick; and the stick even was changed: it was not the familiar ash-plant, it was a blackthorn, and it had a silver band near the top. His coat was of a deeper tint of blue, and of a more grandiloquent cut.

His waistcoat was black; it was cut low, and showed a wide expanse of starched shirt. Below the shirt there was room for a massive chain of silver. His trousers hung with a remarkable perpendicularity; and such was the condition of his boots that I marvelled that I had not been awakened by the rubbing and the accompanying reverberations. He was shaved, not here and there as was his immemorial custom, but with a clear and exhaustive sweep. He had on a hat, black, high-crowned, and of a remarkable width of brim. He went to the mirror and surveyed himself from various points of view. He took off his hat and said, 'In the name of God.' Then he went out of the room, closing the door softly behind him.

"Now, my uncle could not be making preparations for a marriage, for that excellent woman, my aunt, is still in being. He was not going to arrange a match for either of his sons—they have not come to a marriageable age—nor was he going to take a daughter to a convent. Why then this laborious transformation? and why was my uncle going abroad on the first clear day, and the potatoes awaiting spraying?

"The mystery drew me from bed. As I was eating my breakfast my aunt conveyed clues by many hints. My uncle was an ambassador. On account of his silence and discretion he had been selected to go on a mission. That mission was to the house of our parish priest. The mission was undertaken on behalf of a certain young man, newly returned from America. The negotiation on which my uncle had entered would be long, it would have many stages, its ultimate object, however, was a meeting

between the priest's niece and the young farmer, whose name was Stephen Geoghan. Then there would be a conference between the elders with a view to arranging a marriage.

"When I understood the situation," said Farral Gilroy, "I went outside, sat on a ditch, and pictured to myself the opening negotiations. My uncle enters to Father Gilmartin. It would be after breakfast, and the priest would be reading a Latin tome. Father Gilmartin is a student of Aquinas. He has encouraged the co-operative movement, since he discovered in the Summa the metaphysic of co-operation. But you are not to picture the priest as a worn student; Father Gilmartin is old and heavy; his body moves slowly; and his mind, clear and definite as it is, moves slowly also. Imagine the contact of the two minds in this novel and complex subject. In the terms of the case the negotiations would be delicate, the terms elusive. And Father Gilmartin was appallingly deaf. The meeting, as I saw it, was fundamental as opposed to accidental comedy.

"My uncle returned. The negotiations had been long and uncertain. Miss Casey, Father Gilmartin's niece, was going back to Dublin on Wednesday next; but a meeting between herself and Mr Geoghan had been arranged. The lady, her brother, Father Casey, and Father Gilmartin would pass through the town of Clooney on their way to the railway station. They intended to call to the house of Marcus O'Driscoll. Mr O'Driscoll was a close friend of the Geoghan's. Stephen could call in on Wednesday, and thus the parties would meet informally at the house of a

mutual friend. The plan commended itself to my aunt. So much was accomplished, and my uncle's reputation would not be submitted to a further strain. The affair was now with God and Marcus O'Driscoll. Mr Stephen Geoghan then came in. After salutations my uncle silently produced the whisky. He alluded to the respectability of Miss Casey's family, to the numerous priests that that family had produced, to the fact that Miss Casey was related, not remotely, to a bishop. He alluded in guarded terms to her probable dowry. He dwelt on her good looks, her education and refinement. Thus he worked up to the triumph of his own diplomacy. My uncle left down the glass and grasped Stephen by the hand. 'Be at Marcus O'Driscoll's on Wednesday,' he said, 'and there you'll meet the young lady, with her uncle, the priest, and her brother who is a priest, too.' I went out then and left them to their conference. I saw my uncle standing at his door watching Stephen Geoghan parting of the house of his friend, Marcus O'Driscoll. My uncle had not yet taken off his official garb. There was a glow of satisfaction about the whole of the man. In such a warm glow I wish to leave my uncle. You will observe that our family comes out of the affair with credit and with an enchanced reputation.

"I now take up with that remarkable friend, Marcus O'Driscoll. Fortunately for my story you know him. Otherwise it would be difficult for me to shadow forth the personality of Marcus O'Driscoll, Marcus of Clooney. I would have to discover a language at once exuberant and discreet. You remember the last time we fell in with Marcus; he had

been unfolding to a companion a scheme of agrarian reform based on state purchase, and he went back on the argument for our benefit. He spoke weightily, insinuatingly with intimacy. When he heard your name mentioned he had excellent advice to offer as to your attitude towards Trinity College. It was Marcus of Clooney who advised Mr Parnell on a celebrated occasion. I can see him now in the street of Clooney, speaking to the Chief, respectfully, deferentially. His attitude would be that of the private soldier to whom an accident has given the key of the enemy's position. His advice would be respectful and disinterested. You would suspect Marcus O'Driscoll as being from the south of Ireland. As a matter of fact he is from Munster. He has been close up forty years among us; but he still regards himself as a stranger in our midst. He has confided to me that, with the best will in the world, he cannot quite understand our Midland type. He finds us very clannish; and our conduct, political and private, has often been a disappointment to him. In spite of our clannishness, Marcus O'Driscoll has created for himself an extensive acquaintance amongst our people. He was very intimate with the elder Mr Geoghan, and always professed a great regard for the son. He received Stephen warmly. That young man beat about the bush for nine-tenths of his visit, but at last he informed Marcus of the lie of matters. Marcus received the information with becoming discretion. He said little. He walked down the street with Stephen, and shook hands with him many times. He then went back to his shop, and with unexhausted vitality listened to an old woman's

story of how her chickens had perished of an unknown disease. He called in a friend who was passing by, and advised him not to let doctors interfere in a family case. Afterwards he arranged a course of conduct for a grazier who was anxious to surrender a farm. Could the destiny of the house of Geoghan be in safer hands? Marcus was a vital personality. He was, as it were, discretion become self-conscious.

"The representative of the house of Geoghan is unknown to you. Stephen has a good position. He is a good-looking young man, but one who is hesitant and extremely self-conscious. Stephen's self-consciousness, has been increased since his return from America. He brought back a stock of American clothes; and he dresses in the American fashion. He has always the consciousness that the town is agape at his appearance. Really the sensation has long since been exhausted; and the town only thinks of him as a kindly young man who calls for 'cocktails' when he wants 'half-ones.' On Wednesday morning Stephen took a new suit out of his trunk and dressed himself carefully. He had intended to drive into Clooney; but, by the time the horse and car had been got ready, he had come to the conclusion that a yoke in the street would be an embarrassment. He took his bicycle out; but reflection told him that a bicycle would leave him in the town too early. He decided to walk. He turned back from the gate to put on a pair of leggings. The leggings were yellow, like the washed leg of a duck. Stephen Geoghan was tall and of a good figure; the leggings and the American suit became him very well. He was such that any

girl might take a fancy to him. He walked into the town.

"Stephen walked to the town, his thoughts scattered like sheep on a hill. He paused when he came in sight of Clooney: he was overcome by the sight of that wide, open street. Then he made up his mind to advance boldly, and go into the house of Marcus O'Driscoll. He would probably have done this if he had not become conscious of his leggings at this moment. They were bound to attract attention. The people would stand at their doors, or in groups in the street, and watch him pass. They would see him go into Marcus O'Driscoll's shop. If Miss Casey had arrived the mind of the town would jump to his errand. 'Marcus O'Driscoll is making a match for the Yank.' 'Will the christening be with cocktails, I wonder?' No, he couldn't face the town. He turned to the hedge, plucked out a branch of woodbine, and considered his next move. He elaborated a course of conduct: he would walk into the town as if he had come for the sport of the thing; he would go into a newspaper shop near and go over the sporting papers; then, at the time when Father Gilmartin and Miss Casey would be making a start, he would stroll as far as Marcus's shop; Father Gilmartin would then introduce him to Miss Casey; Stephen would also be going to the railway station, and would get a lift on Father Gilmartin's car; he would go as far as Mullingar with the party —thus Miss Casey and he would make acquaintance, informally and agreeably, and he would have ample time to talk over affairs with Miss Casey's male relations. It is agreeable to approach these things

in curves. The man is foolish who attempts to reach ends by straight lines, for the earth is a curve. Besides, with this plan he could arrange things himself without the help of Marcus O'Driscoll. 'Better do without that fellow,' thought young Geoghan; 'he'd never let me forget that I was under a compliment to him. He'd tell the town that it was he got the last hundred thrown in. By God, he'd want the first child christened Marcus. It will be a great surprise to O'Driscoll that I'm able to do things out of my own brain. But I wasn't across the Atlantic Ocean for nothing.' Young Geoghan spoke out of the fundamental ingratitude of humanity. In this mood of his we may note that spiritual defect which is, perhaps, the root of tragedy.

"He went into the newspaper shop near, and took up a sporting paper. He stood reading the paper, his legs wide apart, and the lower ornaments were very conspicuous to those in the street, if there were any who cared to note them. He read one paper, left it down on the counter; then he took up another sporting paper; then he said to the girl:—

"'Do the priests here mind you stocking these papers?'

"'Not a bit,' the girl returned.

"'Do you think would Father Gilmartin mind this paper?' Stephen pursued.

"'I couldn't tell you,' said the girl frankly.

"'Did you hear that Father Gilmartin was to be in the town to-day?'

"'Well, no, I didn't. He didn't come yet, anyway,' said the girl.

"'I suppose you see everyone who comes in?'

" ' Well indeed I do.'

" Stephen sat and waited. After a while he began to doubt the girl's information as to Father Gilmartin. He began to feel certain that the party had arrived, and were now at Marcus O'Driscoll's. But everyone who came into the shop were unanimous in the opinion that Father Gilmartin wasn't in the town. The sands were running out. Stephen would soon have to call at O'Driscoll's, if he were to meet the party at all. He strolled out of the shop. Even now Stephen did not make a straight line. He reflected that it would not look well to make O'Driscoll's a secondary place of call. The best thing to do was to go a little way back, re-enter the town, and go straight to Marcus O'Driscoll's. Stephen turned his back to Marcus O'Driscoll's. As he came to the country road he saw coming towards him the man himself. Marcus shook hands with Stephen. He gave him a pressure long and silent. The handshake said: 'My poor fellow!' Audibly Marcus said:—

" ' Always bring a stick with you when you're walking. And a stick is especially needed along these roads. You're always going up a hill. A stick helps you along more than you'd be inclined to think. Besides, a stick is a comfort when you're by yourself, or on a dark night. It's company; it's like having a dog with you. In my own part of the country no one would go anywhere without a stick; but you can get a good class of a stick in the south of Ireland. I never saw an American stick that I would care to carry. Maybe you have no other sticks except American sticks.'

"Stephen said that he had brought a cane-stick back with him.

"'They're no good,' said Marcus. 'John's James brought one of them back to me, but I never used it. I'll send it over to you some day. It has a silver-mount that is nice enough. But the stick you'd cut yourself is the sweetest stick you could carry. Sit down, now, and I'll give you the signs and tokens of a good stick.'

"They sat down on the ditch, Stephen yielding himself with a prayer that Marcus would soon reach the limit of his disinterestedness. They would soon have to be going to Marcus's house. If there were any for the Dublin train a start would soon have to be made.

"'I believe,' said Marcus, 'that every man ought to cut his own stick. It will come better to his hand afterwards. Now, if you are going to cut a stick about this place, there are only three kinds of timber that you need take into account, and I'll tell you about them now. The hazel makes a satisfactory stick; it's light, and you can cut one with a middling good knife. I heard of a man who cut an ash-plant—cut it, mind you. Always pull an ash-plant. Take one about four feet high and pull it up from the roots. If the root does not suit you, pull another. Ash-plants are as plenty here as stones on the road. But the best stick to have is the blackthorn; it's good at the fair, and it's good on the road. I brought a fine blackthorn with me from the south of Ireland; but it's the hardest thing in the world to keep a good stick. Blackthorns grow straight up in certain places. Pick one out that's well furnished with

thorns. Thorns are the sign of a good stick. Take a little saw with you to cut it. I doubt if you'd have a knife that would cut a blackthorn.'

" ' I'll remember that,' Stephen said, and he rose.

" ' Wait a while,' said Marcus. ' Be careful to cut the stick to your own height. A stick from three feet nine to four feet or four feet and half an inch would just suit you.'

" ' Let us go back to the shop,' said Stephen.

" Marcus arose. ' Another thing about sticks,' he continued, ' when you get your stick bend it to a handle. Put a crook on it. A crook gives you a nice handling on a stick.'

" It was at this moment that a car dashed up. There was a priest and a young lady on the car. For a moment Stephen's heart stood still. But the priest was not Father Gilmartin. The car passed, Marcus O'Driscoll making a salute, grave and subdued. ' 'Pon my word,' said Stephen, ' I thought I was going to see Father Gilmartin.'

" ' He'd have come in only for the Parish Conference,' said Marcus. ' Isn't it queer to think that you might be living ten years next to Martin Fallon, and he'd never give you an advice about a stick.'

" ' Stop,' said Stephen, ' who are them gone by on the car ? '

" ' Father Casey and Miss Casey, to be sure,' said Marcus.

" ' And why didn't you bring me to the shop ? '

" ' And didn't I see you coming from the shop, man ? '

" ' I wasn't in the shop at all,' said Stephen.

" ' Is that the sort of a fellow you are ? ' said

Marcus O'Driscoll. 'There you were, mooning about, and anyone would have thought that something had come between you and the girl.'

"'And you kept me here blathering about sticks.'

"'Blathering about sticks! Didn't I talk to you the way I'd talk to any young man that I'd see walking out by himself without a stick?'

"'It's the like of you that has this country the way it is,' said Stephen, and he turned on his heel. Marcus O'Driscoll stood for a moment looking after him. Then he walked down the street slowly. He stood before his shop door.

"'He's like the rest,' he said; 'they're all the same: all trick-o'-the-loops and three-card men. They're deserving of nothing but Castle government, and may there long be a Castle to rule over them.'

"Marcus was magnanimous still. There was nothing personal in his resentment."

XII

The town consists of a single street, short enough to let you distinguish your friends at the other end. It is market-day, but there is no great bustle in the town. Two or three Constabulary men are lounging in front of the barracks. The notice-board displays a staring proclamation, signed by the Vizier—no, the Viceroy. Under the Viceregal signature are names that seem ridiculous beneath the puissance of the poster. These obscure names represent the Executive in Ireland.

At the butt of the street a dealer is haggling with a girl who has brought young poultry to the market. "This girl was reared in a bog; you'd know that by the way she holds out for her bargain," he says. "The old hags are laughing at her." "I won't take what you offer, anyway." "You'll be sorry, then. I know a girl the picture of you. She refused a good-looking man worth thousands, and now she lies by herself and the bloom has gone off her." The girl is not to be confused by this exuberance of language, and she remains dogged. "The man that gets you won't have much comfort; you'll find that he'll go out and sleep in the hayrick." Then an old woman intervenes. "Take nine shillings, a vourneen deelish (my little loved one)," she says, "and you'll have luck." The girl admits that there is no harm in splitting the difference. The bystanders arrange the treaty, and the dealer and the girl shake hands. When it is all over the man wipes his brow and makes a speech, that is full of a happy incongruity. "You'd need the brain of an elephant in this place. You'd want to be like Jumbo in the Zoological Gardens to be able for the women of Leitrim."

We go into an eating-house frequented by the country people. The walls are crowded with cheap colour prints; a view of Venice is followed by a Siberian hunting scene, then comes the British Child and Dog picture, the State trial of Daniel O'Connell, a sacred picture, Burns' Farewell to Highland Mary, a brewery horse, flowers and fruit, a harvest scene advertising an American plough. In a place such as this the food is highly priced and the cooking is lamentable. We get mutton and vegetables, bread and tea. The

woman of the house comes and discourses to me. She had been in America for years, and she insists that America is the greatest country in the world. A farmer enters and seats himself opposite. He has lost the use of his right hand; the front of his head is bald, with veins across it, and he has frightened eyes. He eats some of his dinner, and then looks across the table. "This is mutton," he says. He stares at the plate stupefied; it is as though he has broken some pledge. Were his family hanged for sheep-stealing, I wonder. "I thought it was beef, and it turns out to be mutton," he says. He sighs, and goes on with his dinner. "It's a long time since you were here, Mr Murphy," our hostess remarks, unconscious of his mysterious struggles. Mr Murphy explains that he comes into her house every time he is in the town, but it is a long time since he was at the market. "And how are you, Mr Murphy?" Mr Murphy sighs, and looks at her with pathos in his good brown eyes. "I'm very much reduced," he says. "Well you're not reduced in flesh, no matter how you may be reduced in spirits." Mr Murphy holds to the word. "I took a couple of glasses of spirits, and that ought to have raised me up," he says. "Maybe it did the opposite?" "Ay—maybe," says Mr Murphy. It was as though the literalness of the common mind overcame one who had a desperate hope in the opium he had taken.

It is "law day" in the town, and the people who come to the table have much to say about a case that is being tried. It is the case of a "grabber" who had shot at a young man. A "grabber" and an "emergency-man" are objects of aversion in an

agrarian community. A " grabber " is the man who takes a farm over the heads of those who, in rural opinion, have the best right to the property, and an " emergency-man " is the one put in charge of the farm of an evicted person until opposition is worn down. Such people are a menace to rural security, they share in the infamy of the informer, and the acts of the "grabber " and the " emergency-man " are remembered to three generations.

The town is across the Cavan border, and the people take Connacht for their province. They like to give themselves a name for passion and violence. The Cavan people pay a tribute to the friendliness of Leitrim, but hold that the people across the border have something barbaric in them. " We're very rough," the Leitrim people say in a way that makes a claim for virility. Coming into the town a Cavan man told us a story illustrating his conception of the Leitrim character. Up in the mountains there a man committed a murder. The police were baffled. Police were drafted there until they were as thick as grass in an acre of meadow. But were the rough and virile people intimidated ? No, the outlaw was sheltered and fed. He went to the races in spite of the fact that five hundred police were waiting for him there ! He stood looking over a fence, and no one dared put a hand on him ! As I went through the town I overheard a conversation about a man who had smashed a drum. " It's a wonder you let go with him," says one. The other, a handsome youth, replies in a voice as soft as a meadow stream, " Sure, we butchered him on the road, but what good was that to us ? If he had to crooken a lip to one of

us we'd have pulled him to pieces." "We left him there in his gores of blood." This violence is purely ideal. I knew the man who had smashed the drum. He came home without a scratch.

In the middle of the street there are three men standing apart. They are sullen-looking fellows. I ask a shopkeeper who they are. "Two grabbers and an emergency-man. They are in the town about a case that is on to-day." "And are they not afraid of the town?" "They needn't be afraid; no one will touch them." "They are boycotted?" "They won't get bit nor sup in the town." "And if one of them comes in and asks to buy this straw hat, what will you do?" "I'll tell him I wouldn't give it to him for a sovereign." It should be remembered that the boycott can only be effective when public opinion knows itself outraged. The grabbers and the emergency-man make a move. No one lifts eyes to them; no countenance is given to them. Gripping their ash-plants the three go down the street.

XIII

The camels went through Clooney with an austere aloofness; their sad and proud heads were lifted high, and they looked as if they had sight of the Deserts beyond. But the elephant hated Clooney. His toes were whitened, and a big star was marked out on his forehead. No one had put on him a sign to show that the cup of his rage was full. But that was shown in his eyes, that were little and very old

and full of malignity. He shambled on, swinging his head from side to side. Not in any order, but as it pleased, the procession went through the town. At the head of the street you saw a bunch of cavaliers in blue and yellow and green. There was a great white horse with a white-clad rider; then a golden chariot with silver dragons carved upon it. The camels had their Arab, and the elephant had his Indian. A black and bucking broncho was bestridden by an iron-handed rider of the Wild West. But who could make words stand for a circus procession? It might be shown in pictures by an artist possessed of the light and the colour of Spain. A girl in blue and silver, mounted on a rhythmically-pacing steed, rode proudly on. Silver scales were woven into the body of her dress, and silver spangled the wide blue of her skirt. Her forehead was pale, and ringlets of gold fell to her waist. On she rode, holding the long white reins loosely in her hands.

. . . . . .

The fair-green was crowded with unusual cattle. Instead of burly bullocks and unsophisticated sheep there were statuesque steeds and pigmy ponies. The horses on the green were really less familiar than the lions that gazed steadily out of the bars of their cage. "One hundred and sixty horses," said the poster; they were all there. Monumental horses, whiter than white-wash, with flowing manes and tails, were having their hooves whitened. Ponies, stranger than the pigmies of Africa, or the dwarfs of a medieval court, stood in a herd. Piebalds roamed about. Undistinguished cart-horses extended the equine area. "Four lions, two camels, eight cockatoos, an elephant, and

an eagle." The eagle was really a vulture. In the cage next the lions' den the vulture sat biding his time. The elephant looked his hatred of Clooney; but in the vulture's unwavering eyes there was a hatred more abysmal. He had followed the banners of Ghengis Khan, and now he sat between dispirited lions and a sullen slave of an elephant. Cockatoos played low comedy in the cage next his. These creatures surpassed the showman's invention. They were whiter than the whiteness of his monumental horses, and more red than the redness of his rider's underskirts; they were graver than clowns off duty, and more sprightly than clowns in the ring. They revealed the fact that the showman works alongside nature. If the circus had not been foreseen, why would such creatures have been invented? They looked as old and as stale as human artifice, and as fresh as our interest in clowns and tumblers; our delight in the colour that is whiter than white and greener than green.

. . . . . .

The great tent baffled the sun; the earth had been freshly turned, and a smell of the sod prevailed above the smell of the sawdust. Horses circled the ring in a gallop that kept up with the gallop of our pulses. The acrobats rested lightly on their trapezes, or suddenly made a swing the accomplice of their flight. Marvels happened to the continuous excitement of the music. The pachyderm led off the performing horse, and then a feat of juggling and athletics was performed before us. A man suspended on his back tossed logs with his feet and made them spin in the air. The music infected the elephant and the horses,

the riders and the acrobats. But just outside the arena a woman worked a sewing-machine steadily. She did not lift her eyes to see the girl who circled the ring, throwing herself into a sitting posture, or raising herself erect on the horse's back. This damsel incarnated the music of the circus. Energy and abandonment filled out the lines of her figure. Round and round she galloped, round and round again—motion, energy, the perfectly incarnated will. The clown grabbed at the galloping horse. He succeeded in holding on. With the wonderful luck of the fool he kept his seat on the horse. Then another horse and rider raced them neck and neck; then another, and then another. With the pole of the circus for pivot the cavalcade swung round and round.

. . . . . .

Men, half-sailors, half-pugilists, had erected the great tent. There was an inner ring and an outer ring, and two tiers of seats. We sat near the outer ring and the sawdust, and the great ones of the town were on the high seats next the canvas. There you saw policemen with tenderly-reared families of little girls, and late-come bank clerks who commented freely on the performance. On the same tier of seats, but far away from bank clerks and policemen, were four creatures distinct from the rest of the audience. What were they? They wore some regulation garb, and each showed some distinct abasement of the human type. Evidently, they were from the workhouse, and defectives. We were now at the end of the performance, and the lions were about to be brought into the circus. The old apple woman hastened from the outer ring. In came the beasts,

their cage drawn by two cart-horses. The lions planted themselves at the four sides of the cage and looked at us steadily. The ring-master made an impressive announcement. "Herr Forrestier will now go through the performance that he has given before all the crowned heads of Europe. He will put his head into the lion's mouth. He does this at the imminent risk of his life." A lioness was induced to extend herself upward. The tamer forced her mouth open and ducked in his head. Then he got out of the cage, and, safe on the sawdust, received our ovation. The lions roared, but the life seemed to have gone out of the circus. We were aware of the old cart-horses with drooping heads, of the defective men behind, of the lions, subject less to native rage than to neurasthenia. We went out of the tent and saw the proprietor before his van, sitting like a Pasha, a green parrot beside him.

XIV

Cavan Races

An Old Ballad

Cavan is a sporting place adapted for the game,
Well improv'd for recreations with a smooth and level plain,
To see each steed, with gallant speed, all prancing for the start,
And inclined to face the winning post, and no one there is slack.

The tents are in rotation in the middle of the course,
With the best accommodation in the world can produce.
The landlady inside with her bottle and glass,
And she multiplying the whiskey lest the topers should run short.

It's there you'd see confectioners with sugar sticks and cakes,
To accommodate the ladies and to molify their tastes ;
The gingerbread and lozenges and spices of all sorts,
And a big crubeen for threepence to be picking till you're home.

It's there you'd see the muggers and they firing at their hoops,
And the man with the long garter they call the trick-of-the-loup ;
The thimble men so nimble that never acted wrong,
And the splendid wheel of fortune that lately came from France.

It's there you'd see the pipers and fiddlers in tune,
And the dancers without falter that can crack and tip the floor,
They'll call for liquor merrily, and pay before they go,
And they'll treat and kiss the girls, and their mothers will not know.

It's there you'd see the jockeys and they dressed in blue and green,
And they mounted on their horses most commodious to be seen.

When the bugle sounds for starting the people shout
for joy,
And they betting ten to one upon the horse that wins
the prize.

Now my pen is weary and I mean to end my song,
Success attend the gentlemen the races first began ;
Success attend each gallant steed that nimbly crossed
the plain,
May we live to see the races in Cavan once again.

PART III

THE WEST—SKETCHES

" Now coming on Spring the days will be growing,
And after Saint Bride's Day, my sail I will throw,
Since the thought has come to me, I fain would be going
Till I stand in the middle of the County Mayo.

The first of my days will be spent in Claremorris
And in Balla down from it I'll have drinking and sport,
To Kiltimagh then I shall go on a visit,
And there I can tell you a month will be short.

I solemnly swear that the heart in me rises
As the wind rises up and the mist breaks below
When I think upon Carra and on Gallen down from it,
The Bush of the Mile and the Plains of Mayo.

Killeadean's my village, and every good's in it,
There's raspberries, blackberries, and all kinds of fruit,
And if Raftery stood in the midst of his people,
Old age would go from him and he'd be in his youth."

P. C.

(*From the Irish of Raftery's* " County Mayo.")

I

The vicinity of the town seems to be in the grip of an invading army. On outside cars and on bicycles, and armed with rifles of the latest pattern, the Constabulary patrol the country. There has been agrarian trouble in the district and cattle have been repeatedly driven off a ranch.

The town is in a fertile plain ; it is at the end of a railway line, and has the trade of the villages in an area of forty miles. To-day business and repression are mixed. A few clumps of black cattle are in the street. Mountain ponies with flowing manes and tails, and eyes that are like the eyes of deer, roam about. The men have ash-plants in their hands : they go in twos and threes talking earnest Irish or English. Everywhere there are armed constabulary. In a room off a shop a reserve company are playing cards. One constable stands fully dressed. With his helmet, his wide purple lips and his weather-beaten face, he looks like a Roman veteran. Suddenly a squad marches down the street and the band that is with a popular gathering plays defiantly.

In from the empty country come carts loaded with black turf. They pass others that go out piled with bags of flour. If we follow the outgoing carts we will go into the area of agrarian disturbance. I walk with two men and one of them has just been released from the gaol of the town.

II

Land Hunger

One rarely saw Michael Heffernan apart from his son Hugh. Hugh was less of a personality than his father, but in a crowd of Connacht people he was noticeable for his quiet manner; he always seemed a little withdrawn from the life of the fair or the spree. You might describe Hugh Heffernan as a "soft young fellow." He did not look robust, and there was something of solicitude in the way that his father watched him. Michael Heffernan was typical of his people. He had the peasant face, broad and shrewd, the deep-set, humorous eyes, and the resolute mouth. He had been away from the land for years. After the death of his wife, Michael went to England, and he had worked in a dockyard amongst aliens. He had come back to Connacht to mind the child, he said. The child had called him, surely, but the land had called him, too. The little house on the wet hillside, the patch of land around, had drawn Michael Heffernan as the ship draws the sailor, as the barrack draws the soldier. Michael had nature for the land, as they say. I do not know what visionary faculty he possessed, but I venture to think that beyond the smoke of the shipping town, Michael Heffernan often saw the potatoes become green on the ridge and the oats patch turn from green to yellow. This man had no affinity with his companions nor his English surroundings, and the money paid to him was only little coins. He wanted

A MAN OF THE CONGESTED DISTRICTS.
(From a photograph.)

to see his labour grow into something; become crop and harvest. And so he came back to the deep soil, to the smell of the earth, to the satisfaction of being over the sod. He came back to his farm, and his child. Tenderly he reared one, shrewdly he worked the other. Hugh had grown up; he was now a young man of twenty-three, and father and son were inseparable. They lived together and alone. A neighbour woman milked the cow and made the cake for them.

The Heffernans had only four acres of land; they were pinched between a mountain and a grazing farm. On the day of his return Michael Heffernan walked through his own little holding and saw the rich land beyond, vacant except for cattle. From that day he hungered for more land. To have ample land, and with the land cattle and horses. No man had a better eye for a beast, no man had a better hand on a horse. He would walk up and down the fair watching the cattle and the horses and going over their points. His own holding could only support a cow, a calf, an ass, and some sheep. We realise the pinch of small holdings when we consider what the lack of a horse meant to the Heffernans. It meant that the tillage of the farm must be done with the spade, and this is an enormous tax in labour. Many's the time Michael Heffernan let his spade lie while he watched the horses of the rich farmer plough up the ridge of the hillside. Isn't it well for them who can yoke horses to their plough! The horses go before you, turning up the earth; so much done, so little labour on yourself. The wide space of ground, the horses, the plough, had an imaginative value

for Michael Heffernan. To this child of the earth to plough with horses was poetry and ritual.

Michael had often to compare Hugh's living with the living enjoyed by the young men working in the dockyards of England. He would see Hugh going out in the morning without a rasher to his breakfast and without an egg three days in the week. Hugh was ill one time and Michael had to ask milk from a neighbour. Coming back, he looked across the grass lands adjoining his holding. He saw the calves sucking milk from the cows. Michael Heffernan was filled with the indignation of the Prophets of the Old Testament. It was as if you had seen a riotous youth trampling a loaf in the gutter. Christians were without the milk of a cow!

The sight entered Michael Heffernan's heart. It went towards making him the prophet of an agrarian agitation. Soon after this there was a meeting in the Chapel yard—a lecturer had come to tell the people of a new method of spraying potatoes. Some of the speakers referred to the possibility of a certain Land Department taking over Lord Clanwilliam's estate and redistributing the land amongst those whose holdings were not up to the economic standard of twenty acres. Michael Heffernan was moved to speak. He spoke with the power of a man who feels deeply. Let them divide the land and give poor people a chance to live. They were worn out working on their little farms. They were without proper food; in bad seasons they were without the turf for the fire. Let them make division of the land, and they would have the prayers of the poor people—ay, and the blessing of God, too, who never intended

that people should have such a poor way of living. Michael Heffernan's speech found a vigorous response. As a consequence of the feeling aroused, pressure was brought on the Land Department to open negotiations with Lord Clanwilliam. One Sunday the priest announced from the altar that negotiations were proceeding. Michael Heffernan was profoundly moved. When he knelt down again he said a prayer for success and for God's guidance.

The negotiations bore no fruit for the tenants. A grazier from the town offered a good rent for the grass and the land that adjoined. Michael Heffernan's holding was let on the eleven months' system. Michael was in the town when the news became known. He hurried back. Standing on the ditch, he saw the stock put on the farm. There were only fifty head of cattle brought that evening, and a few sheep and lambs. He went to the house, and Hugh and himself sat over the fire for a long time that night. They rested themselves for a while on the bed, and at daylight they went out. They rounded up the sheep and cattle. Early in the morning they were driving the flocks and herds along the road back to the town, five miles away. Men turned back from their journey and joined them. Early workers in the field threw down the spade and went with them. Young men came out of the houses and joined the troop. It was a good-humoured, if excited, crowd. Hugh Heffernan was wild with excitement. He shouted and sang songs. Michael went on the march steadily and seriously. He drove Ireton's cattle as though he had been paid for it. He could not but be attentive to cattle. He had been reared amongst

these friendly beasts, and he could no more injure a cow than he could pass by on the road and see a cow trampling down a field of oats. He picked up a lamb and carried it in his arms. With the great, lumbering beasts before them the people came into the town. They brought the cattle up to the grazier's house, and they soon had Mr Ireton amongst them. In a few words Michael Heffernan told the grazier that the peasants would not allow cattle on that part of Lord Clanwilliam's estate. The estate must be broken up and divided amongst the people who wanted land.

Next day the original stock and additions were put back on the grass farm. The grazier had invested his money, and was not going to be at any loss. Besides, a political party urged him to make a fight and promised him a backing. John Ireton was a man of the Planter breed. By tradition and connection he belonged to the landlord regime. His connections were amongst bailiffs and agents, and the position and incomes of this class were endangered by land transfer. John Ireton was kindly to his neighbours, but he sincerely distrusted the Celtic peasantry. Between him and them there was a racial antipathy not to be overcome. It was class against class—ay, appetite against appetite. John Ireton stood up for his own appetite and his own class.

It was to the interest of the people to make grazing profitless; therefore, though extra police were brought into the district, the cattle were driven again. This time the cattle would not be brought to the grazier's yard; they would be scattered to the four

corners of the county. Michael Heffernan told his son to remain at home. Serious and determined himself, he joined the assembly. He drove off a certain number of cattle towards the hills. That day the people came into conflict with the police, and Michael Heffernan was arrested on a charge of inflicting injury on Mr Ireton's cattle. He was asked to find bail. Michael Heffernan felt very seriously about the cause. He knew the land was not to be won lightly nor without sacrifice. He refused to find bail and he went to jail for a month. Meantime the agrarian trouble came to a settlement. Mr Ireton surrendered the farm to Lord Clanwilliam, and the landlord reopened negotiations with the Land Department. Michael Heffernan came out of prison, crowds cheering, victory assured. He walked about unsteadily. Hugh came to him, and they left the town and the crowds. There was a darkness on Michael's spirit, the shadow of disgrace and humiliation. He let Hugh talk, saying a few vague words himself now and again. The familiar roads and the sight of growing things brought some restoration.

"Hugh, a chara," said Michael out of a silence, "you will have a good place for yourself some day."

"The sergeant told me that ten acres would be added to our holding," Hugh said.

"Now, isn't that better than an American legacy?" said Michael. He knew that it was better than ten legacies; an American legacy never brought luck to anyone. But Michael had not begun to think as yet. He could only find formal expressions. "We can keep a horse now," he went on.

"If we had a horse I could earn good money

many's the day in the week, drawing goods from the town."

"We will have a beast or a couple of beasts," Michael replied. Father and son walked on in silence. Then Michael said, after a space:

"I saw you with a young woman one Sunday evening, and she was a stranger to me."

"She's by the name of Coyne," Hugh said briefly and formally.

"Maybe she'd be a daughter to Bartley Coyne?" Michael went on.

"She is. She is Bedellia Coyne, and she's back from America a while now," Hugh replied.

"Ay, Bridget Coyne," said Michael, giving her her pre-American name. "She was a good while in America, and all her people had the name of being saving."

"She has earned her fortune like many's the girl," said Hugh. There was silence between the two men for a while. Then Michael said:

"I don't care for Yankees, no matter for their fortunes. They're no good about a farmer's house."

"Bedellia Coyne is a good girl," Hugh said, rather warmly. "She's a great favourite with me. And she has a wish for me, too. I know that."

"Please yourself, my son," said Michael. "I'm only thinking about your prosperity. My life wouldn't be any good to me unless I saw you prosperous from this out. Stay on the land for a while and do nothing until we settle down."

That evening Michael Heffernan made a journey over to Coyne's and received something of a state welcome from Bartley and his woman. He saw

Bedellia, and approved of her, although he would have preferred a country girl for his son. Bedellia had distinction in dress and appearance. She was fair, and, like Irish girls of that type who have been for some years in America, her hair and her eyes were rather faded. Bedellia was in no hurry back to the States. She had got fond of Hugh Heffernan, the quiet, mannerly, young fellow, and she had made up her mind to marry him.

The young men in the district had attained a certain prosperity. There was talk of marriages and of the building of new houses. Hugh Heffernan and Bedellia Coyne were one of the four couples that got married that summer.

III

A district is said to be congested when the land available is not sufficient in area nor productive enough in quality to provide economic holdings for the families settled in the district. What area constitutes an economic holding in Ireland? According to the leaflet issued by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction,[1] the area should not be less than fifty acres. The Department's expert notes that an economic holding should be such as to enable a farmer to bring up his family in a spirit of independence, to supply them with a sufficient amount of wholesome food and serviceable clothing; to provide them with a fair general education; to apprentice one or more children to a business or a trade; to find constant employment for himself and the son

[1] Leaflet No. 34—"The Revival of Tillage in Ireland."

who is to succeed him, as well as to occupy profitably the spare time of other members of the family until they leave the home, and finally, to save enough to prevent his being a burden on the son who succeeds him. The minimum size of the holding that will meet these conditions is determined by which instrument of tillage can be used with economy—the spade or the plough. Now the spade can only be used economically under a system of intensive cultivation, and this style of culture is impossible in Ireland except in a few favoured localities. Under existing conditions Irish farmers have to make use of a system that aims at the production of roots, potatoes, corn, hay, and grass, to be sold or converted into beef, mutton, pork, butter, eggs and poultry. They must use, not the spade but the plough. The efficient working of the plough, says the Department's expert, necessitates the use of two horses: a holding, therefore, to be economic, should be of a size sufficient, to keep two horses at work—about fifty statute acres of average quality, exclusive of bog and land that cannot be cultivated or reclaimed. There are 590,000 holdings in Ireland. Out of these 350,000 (exclusive of 75,000 not exceeding an acre) do not exceed thirty statute acres in area. In the Congested Districts, the holdings are generally from four to six acres. The parts of Ireland said to be congested are now under the administration of the Congested Districts Board. The immediate policy of the Board is to secure the productive lands in the vicinity of the uneconomic holdings and divide them amongst the tenants that are pinched.

IV

The new settlers are destitute of capital, stock and implements, and they are often without the training and discipline necessary for larger agriculture. Under these circumstances the Congested Districts Board has often to adopt an attitude of paternalism towards them. This paternalism must often be injurious to the enterprise of the new settlers. Voluntary co-operation seems to offer the best solution of the material and moral problems involved in the new settlement—co-operation applied to rural credit, to butter-production, to cottage industries and perhaps to grazing.

V

The district around Foxford looks like a very Thebaid. Here Nature seems to have tried every form of infertility possible in a moist climate. There are bogs in every part of Ireland, but here the bogs run into barren hills. Elsewhere the hills are treeless and bare, but here they have a special desolation: they are mere ridges of sullen infertility not high enough to lift the mind. Everywhere there are rocks. Stones lie in the fields, and the fences of the little clearings are of stone. Where there is cultivation the ridges of black earth are interrupted by rocks. These patches of tillage add to the desolation of the country, for they give the impression of painful effort. Then there are stretches of water and water-logged fields. In the fields there is not a beast. But the

human habitations are signs of hope on these bleak landscapes. They are out of harmony with the surrounding bog, but they are tidy, well-built and comfortable. The houses are new: none of the old hovels are to be seen. These new cottages are the most conspicuous result of the Congested Districts Board's Administration.

VI

We have suggested that on these tiny holdings the plough cannot be used. All the labour must be done with the spade or the loy. As a consequence of this the owner of the little holding cannot take employment as an agricultural labourer, for the tilled acre demands all his sweat. The land cannot support the people, and the income derived from the cottage industries that the Board has set up is hardly perceptible. Men and women go as agricultural labourers to England and Scotland at certain seasons, and the earnings of these migratory labourers go to make up the living of the families in the Congested Districts. But the biggest contribution to the income of the families comes from America. Into eight poor districts, thousands of pounds are sent every year—mainly the earnings of girls in domestic service. With the contribution received, each household pays the shop debts and buys the year's stock—a few sheep and a cow perhaps. Naturally the emigration from these districts is large. Out of a family of six four go to America.

VII

In Connemara one cannot help but notice the industry of the men and women, but of the women especially. The people are constant workers in their fields and in their houses. They continue cottage industries which have died out in other parts of Ireland. They make beautiful lace. Emigration has reduced the people in numbers, but as yet it has caused no visible deterioration in the type. The people are noticeably handsome and remarkably intelligent, and they have a vitality that lets them work all day and dance half the night. Emigration is not such a menace to racial fitness as the late and ill-assorted marriages which are common in more prosperous parts of the country. About Connemara, the people, having nothing to lose, marry young—the women under twenty generally. The Connacht woman is a fine type and must impress the observer.

VIII

There are few books of which it may be said that in them is the secret of a race. Amongst such books is " The Love-Songs of Connacht," a volume in Dr Douglas Hyde's collection " The Songs of Connacht." " On the verge of inarticulateness " Mr W. B. Yeats said of some of these songs. Made by peasant men and women, the songs have an indeliberate simplicity that we can never find in cultured poetry. They have

the simplicity of nature, but they have also the subtlety of passion. A girl says :—

> " A hundred farewells to last night;
> It's my grief that to-night was not first."

And there is another poem that gives a passion the barest, the least sophisticated expression. It is called " The Brow of the Red Mountain." A girl speaks :—

" I am sitting up,
Since the moon rose last night,
And putting down a fire
And ever kindling it diligently;
The people of the house are lying down,
And I am by myself;
The cocks are crowing,
And the land is asleep but me.
That I may never leave the world
Till I loose from me the ill-luck,
Till I have cows and sheep,
And my one desire of a boy.
I would not think the night long,
That I would be stretched by his smooth white breast,
And sure I would allow the race of Eve after that
To say their choice thing of me. . . . The curse of the Son of God
Upon that one who took from me my love,
And left me by myself
Every single long night in misery.
And, O young boy,
I am no material for mockery for you;
You have nothing to say
Except that I am without dowry. You are not my love
And my destruction if I am sorry for it;
And if I am without cattle I am able to lie alone. "

And here is an exquisite poem which Dr Hyde took down from the mouth of an old woman who lived in a

hut in the middle of a Roscommon bog. Dr Hyde's English rendering of the Gaelic is always admirable. His knowledge of the dialect used by English-speaking peasants enables him to give a translation that is close to idiomatic. And he is an ingenious metrical artist. But inevitably this translation lacks the exquisite variety of sound that is in the original :—

"My grief on the sea,
How the waves of it roll!
They come between me
And the love of my soul!

Abandoned, forsaken
To trouble and care—
Will the sea never waken,
Relief from despair.

My grief and my trouble—
Would that he and I were
In the province of Leinster
Or the County of Clare.

Were I and my darling—
O heart-bitter wound—
On board of a ship
For America bound.

On a green bed of rushes
All last night I lay,
And I flung it abroad
With the heat of the day.

And my love came behind me—
He came from the south;
His breast to my bosom,
His mouth to my mouth."

West of the Shannon one can still find life as primitive as at the beginning of social organisation. The people have been hindered from producing a material

civilisation, but they are free of their emotion and their imagination. The hard conditions of Connacht life have helped the Connacht women to development and personality. The size of the holding does not permit the man to develop his constructive and organising faculty. The woman becomes the personality amongst the Connacht peasantry, and the civilisation is of her creating. It is the civilisation of the hearth. One cannot fail to note the number of words for " child " in constant use ; there is a word for the child in the cradle, the child creeping on the floor, the child going to school, the growing child— " naoidhean," " lanabh," " malrach," " piaste,"— words as soft and as intimate as a caress. The tragedies of Connacht life come closest to the woman. As a child she sees the sister who reared her leave home for America ; as a wife she lives alone while her husband works abroad, and often her child is born while its father is labouring the fields of England or Scotland. As a mother she sees her rearing go from her as they grow up. In the book of love-songs we find that in the world of passion the woman is supreme. Two songs placed at the beginning of the collection make us realise the difference between the man's way of loving and the woman's way of loving. This is from the man's song :—

" How well for the birds in all weather ;
They rise up on high in the air,
And then sleep upon one bough together,
Without sorrow, or trouble, or care ;
But so it is not in this world
With myself and my thousand-times fair,
Far away, far apart from each other,
Each day rises barren and bare."

Contrast this charming sentiment with the truth and power of the woman's song :—

" My heart is bruised and broken
Like the ice-flag on the top of the water,
As it were a cluster of nuts after their breaking,
Or a young maiden after her marrying.

. . . . . .

I denounce love, woe for her who gave it
To the son of yon woman, who never understood it.
My heart in my middle, sure he has left it black,
And I do not see him in the street nor in any place."

The contrast between the man's way of loving and the woman's way of loving goes through the whole collection. Here is the prose of a man's song. It has exquisite music in Irish :—

In Ballinahinch, in the West, my love is for a year; she is more exquisite than the sun of autumn, and sure honey grows after her on the track of her foot on the mountain, no matter how cold the time after November-day. If I were to get my desire I would take her in my net, and I would put away from me this grief and trouble. But for the counsel of all ever born, I shall only marry my desire; she is the Moorneen of the fair hair.

We have charming desire beside vehement passion when we put beside this a woman's song :—

And farewell henceforth to yon town westward among the trees; it is there that I am drawn early and late. Many is the wet, dirty morass and crooked road going between me and the town where my treasure is. . . . O Paddy, are you sorry that I am ill, and do you think bad of it that I am going to the churchyard ?

O Paddy of the bound black hair it is your mouth that is sweet, and until I go under the ground my affection will be on you for your converse with me. . . . And O dear Virgin what shall I do if you go from me ? I have no knowledge of your

house, your haggard, or your stacks. Ah, faithful was the counsel that my people gave me not to elope with you, for you had the hundred twists in your heart and the thousand tricks.

These poems have natural subtlety, some of them have intellectual subtlety also. Some of the peasant poems show exquisite perception. In one of them the lover speaks of his sweetheart as having "the little hands of Mary" (the virgin), and he says, "The sun loses its heat when my swan goes abroad, and the moon makes obeisance to her." And in another peasant poem there is the phrase "Her rose-ember mouth."

I cannot help contrasting "The Love Songs of Connacht" with a collection of Roumanian folk-poetry. Ours is slighter in volume, but when we have added to the love songs our religious songs, our keens or lamentations for the dead, our political songs and our drinking songs, we will be able to show a collection of folk-poetry as bulky as "the Bard of the Dimbovitza." In the poetry of the two countries the external life presented offers the first contrast. The people move in gold, in sunshine, in the Roumanian songs, and there are glowing harvests and blossoming fruit trees. Girls dance under acacia trees. Outside on the walls of the houses flowers are painted. The hero of a girl's dream rides by and the lute-player comes to the door. Grief itself moves amongst gracious things. And this world is sufficient. There is no burthen of an invisible world. Ghosts come but they are from the grave only. The grave is a pitiful fact, but meantime the living are free, brave and joyous. Not-being to these people is the tragic idea. "Barren," "No

Son," "Stillborn," is the most piercing of their songs.

Different indeed is the world of the Connacht song. Here external life is bare, and he who would put beauty around his love must bring it from afar. "The cuckoo cries in the winter over the village where she is living." "Honey grows behind the track of her feet on the mountain, and it seven weeks after November day." External life is harsh. "Many is the wet dirty morass and crooked road going between me and the town where my treasure is." The most powerful expressions are in terms of this harshness as in the song where the girl says that her heart is bruised and broken like the ice-flag on the top of water, and as black as the coal that would be burnt in the forge. The invisible world is constantly obtruding. The makers of these songs have religion in the blood, and passion itself must speak the language of religion.

"O Úna, O maiden, O friend, and O golden tooth!
O little mouth that never uttered an injustice,
I had rather be beside her on a couch, ever kissing her,
Than to be sitting in Heaven on the chair of the Trinity"—

says the maker of one of the poems, but he is well aware of his blasphemy :—

"O fair Úna, it is you that set astray my senses;
O Úna it was you who went close in between me and God;
O Úna, fragrant branch, twisted little curl of the ringlets,
Was it not better for me to be without eyes than ever to have seen you."

After the Roumanian songs with their agreeable and abundant life and their tinge of pantheism,

the world of the Connacht songs seems primitive. And yet the love expressed in these songs is a subtle and complex emotion. There are many generations of refinement below the flowering of such a mood as this :—

" Ringleted youth of my love,
With thy locks bound loosely behind thee,
You passed by the road above,
But you never came in to find me ;
Where were the harm for you,
If you came for a little to see me ?
Your kiss is a wakening dew,
Were I ever so ill or so dreamy.

. . . . . .

I thought, O my love ! you were so
As the moon is, or sun, on the fountain,
And I thought after that you were snow,
The cold snow on the top of the mountain ;
And I thought after that you were more
Like God's lamp shining to find me,
Or the bright star of knowledge before,
And the star of knowledge behind me.

You promised me high-heeled shoes,
And satin and silk, my storeen,
And to follow me, never to lose
Though the ocean were round us roaring ;
Like a bush in a gap in a wall
I am left now lonely without thee,
And this house I grow dead of, is all
That I see around or about me."

The Roumanian folk-songs have a quality that is not in the Gaelic—profound reflection. They have masculine power and masculine construction, while the Connacht songs have feminine intensity. The

end of the Roumanian poem, "No Son," is full of grave consideration :—

"Silent was she, for she knew not how to answer;
Silent were both our hearts, for they were empty.
Then of all loneliness, and pain and sorrow,
I felt myself the father—
The son of the graves I felt myself, and the husband
Of yon dumb woman, whose womb would be silent ever
As were our hearts.
Then, that we might forget we looked at the furrows
All full of seed, and some shoots already were breaking
Forth from the furrows, and said, 'We, we are born,'
Nor did one of us ask the other 'wherever art thou looking,'
We only looked at the growing seeds together."

Under this I write twelve lines that are alive with a moment's intensity. I found them in a manuscript collection of Connacht songs. A man whose name is Bourke has been killed. Those who killed him, evidently, are his sisters' husbands. Bourke's wife asks the sisters to come to the table :—

"Draw near to the table, ye that wear the cloaks;
Here ye have flesh, but it is not roast flesh,
Nor boiled in pots, nor cooked for feasting,
But my dear Bourke—och, och, after been slain.

You, young woman, who are drinking the wine there,
Let my sharp screeches pierce your heart.
If I am wise I may get whatever is my lot,
But you will never—och, och, och—get another brother!

O young woman, don't you pity my sorrow?
My mourning over the bier of my spouse?
A lock of his hair is locked within my purse,
And his offspring—och, och—hidden within me!"

IX

The Death of the Rich Man

It was a road as shelterless and bare as any road in Connacht. On one side there was a far-stretching bog, on the other side little fields, cold with tracts of water. You faced the Connacht hills, bleak and treeless, with little streams across them like threads of steel. There was a solitary figure on the road—a woman with bare feet and ragged clothes. She was bent, and used a stick; but she carried herself swiftly, and had something of a challenge in her face. Her toothless mouth was tightly closed, her chin protruded, wisps of hair fell about her distrustful eyes. She was an isolated individual, and it would be hard to communicate the sensations and facts that made up her life. Irish speakers would call the woman a "shuler." The word is literally the same as "tramp," but it carries no anti-social suggestion. None of the lonely cabins about would refuse her hospitality; she would get shelter for the night in any one of them, the sack of chaff beside the smouldering fire, the share in the household bit. But though she slept by their fires and ate their potatoes and salt, this woman was apart from them, and apart from all those who lived in houses, who tilled their fields, and reared up sons and daughters; she had been moulded by unkind forces, the silence of the roads, the bitterness of the winds, the long hours of hunger. She moved swiftly along the shelterless road, muttering to herself, for the appetite

was 'plaining within her. There on her way was a certain village, but before going through it she would give herself a while of contentment. She took a short pipe out of her pocket and sought the sheltered side of a bush. Then she drew her feet under her clothes and sucked in the satisfaction of tobacco.

You may be sure the shuler saw through the village, though her gaze was across the road. Midway on the village street there was a great house; it was two stories above the cottages, and a storey higher than the other shops. It was set high above its neighbours, but to many its height represented effort, ability, discipline. It was the house of Michael Gilsenin, farmer, shopkeeper, local councillor. "Gilsenin, the Gombeen man," the shuler muttered, and she spat out. Now the phrase "Gombeen man" would signify a grasping peasant dealer, who squeezed riches out of the poverty of his class, and few people spoke of Michael Gilsenin as a Gombeen man; but his townsmen and the peasants around would tell you that Michael Gilsenin had the open hand for the poor, and that he never denied them the bag of meal, nor the sack of seed-potatoes; no, nor the few pounds that would bring a boy or girl the prosperity of America. To the woman on the ditch Michael Gilsenin was the very embodiment of worldly prosperity. It was said—and the shuler exclaimed on Heaven at the thought—that Michael's two daughters would receive dowries of a thousand pounds each. Michael had furnished the new chapel at a cost of five hundred pounds; he had bought recently a great stock of horses and cattle; he had built sheds and stables behind his shop. And Michael Gilsenin

had created all his good fortune by his own effort. The shuler wondered what bad luck eternal Justice would send on his household to balance this prosperity. And in her backward-reaching mind, the shuler could rake out only one thing to Michael's discredit. This was his treatment of Thady, his elder brother. It was Thady who owned the cabin and the farm on which the Gilsenins had begun their lives. Michael had reduced his grasping and slow-witted brother to subordination, and he had used his brother's inheritance to forward himself. In forwarding himself Michael had forwarded the family, Thady included, and now, instead of life in a cabin, Thady had a place in a great house. Michael was old now, the shuler mused, he was nearly as old as herself. It was well for those who would come after him. His daughters had dowries that made them the talk of Connacht, and his son would succeed to stock, farms, and shop. The shuler stretched out her neck and looked down the road and in to the village street. She saw the tall grey building, the house of stone with the slated roof and the many windows. And she saw a man hobbling out of the village. He had two sticks under him for he was bent with the pains. The man was Thady Gilsenin, Michael's brother.

Thady Gilsenin was grudging and hard-fisted to the beggars, but he always stayed to have speech with them. His affinities were with these people of the roads. By his hardness and meanness, by his isolation and his ailments, he was kin to the shuler and her like. She quenched the pipe, hid it under her clothes, and waited for Thady Gilsenin.

. . . . . .

THE TWELVE PINS, CO. MAYO.
(From an oil sketch by William MacBride.)

He stood before her, a grey figure leaning on two sticks. His hands were swollen with the pains, their joints were raised and shining.

"Well, ma'am," said Thady, "you're round this way again, I see."

"My coming won't be any loss to you, Thady Gilsenin," the shuler returned.

Thady turned round and looked back at the big house.

"And how is the decent man, your brother?" asked the shuler, "and how are his daughters, the fine growing girls?"

"His fine daughters are well enough," said Thady, turning round.

"There will be a grand marriage here some day," said the shuler, "I'm living on the thought of that marriage."

"It's not marriage that's on our minds," Thady said, in a resigned way.

The shuler was quick to detect something in his tone.

"Is it death?" she asked.

"Ay, ma'am, Death," said Thady; "Death comes to us all."

"And is it Michael that is likely to die?"

"Michael himself," said Thady.

This to the tramp was as the news of revolution to men of desperate fortune. The death of Michael Gilsenin would be a revolution with spoils and without dangers. She was thrilled with expectancy, and she said aloud: "O God, receive the prayers of the poor, and be merciful to Michael Gilsenin this day and this night. May angels watch over him. May he receive

a portion of the bed of heaven through the gracious intercession of the blessed Mother of God. May he reign in splendour through eternity. Amen, amen, amen." And crying out this she rose to her feet. "I'm going to his house," she said. "I'll go down on my two knees and I'll pray for the soul of Michael Gilsenin, the man who was good to the poor." She went towards the village striking her breast and muttering cries. Thady stood for a moment, looking after her; then he began to hobble forward on his two sticks. They were like a pair of old crows, hopping down the village, towards the house of Michael Gilsenin.

. . . . . .

She could never have imagined such comforts and conveniences as she saw now in the chamber of the dying man. There was the bed, large enough to hold three people, with its stiff hanging and its stiff counterpane, its fine sheets, its blankets and quilt, its heap of soft pillows. There was the carpet warm under her own feet, and then the curtains to the window that shut out the noise and the glare. A small table with fruit and wine was by the bed, and a red lamp burnt perpetually before the image of the Sacred Heart, and so the wasting body and the awakening soul had their comforts and their convenience. Michael's two daughters were in the room. They stood there broken and listless; they had just come out of the convent and this was their noviciate in grief. The shuler noted how rich was the stuff in their black dresses, and noted, too, their white hands, and the clever shape of their dresses. As for the dying man, she gave no heed to him after the

first encounter. He was near his hour, and she had looked too often upon the coming of death.

They gave her a bed in the loft, and she lay that night above the stable that was back of the great house. She had warmed herself by the kitchen fire, and had taken her fill of tea, and now she smoked and mused, well satisfied with herself. "This night I'm better off than the man in the wide bed," she said to herself. "I'm better off than you this night, Michael Gilsenin, for all your lands and shops and well-dressed daughters. I'm better off than you this night, Michael Gilsenin, for all your stock and riches. Faith, I can hear your cattle stir in the sheds, and in a while you won't even hear the rain upon the grass. You have children to come after you, Michael Gilsenin, but that's not much after all, for they'll forget you when they've come from the burial. Ay, they will in troth! I've forgotten the man that lay beside me, and the child that I carried in my arms." She pulled a sack over her feet and knees and up to the waist, and sleep came to her on the straw. But she was awake and felt the tremor through the house, when Death came and took his dues. From that onward her sleep was broken, for people had come and horses were being brought out of the stable. Once old Thady came out, and the shuler heard him mutter about the loss in hay and oats.

When she came down to the yard she saw a well-dressed young man tending his horse. One of Michael's daughters came and stood with the young man, and the two talked earnestly together. The shuler knelt down on a flag and began sobbing and

clapping her hands, she was working up to a paroxysm, but gradually, for she wanted to attract the attention of the pair without distressing them overmuch. The girl went indoors, and the young man followed her. The shuler saw two empty bottles; they were worth a penny. She hid them under her dress and went into the house. She made her way to the front door, passing by many. People of importance were coming, and in such an assembly something surely would be gained. She stood by the street door and watched the great people come, priests, doctors, lawyers, shopkeepers and councillors. She stood there like an old carrion bird, her eyes were keen with greed, and her outstretched hand was shaking. She heard old Thady saying, "Now, thank God, we can be clear for the day of the fair. I was thinking that he would still be with us on the fair day, and we would have to close the shop, and that would be a great loss to us. Now we can have everything cleared off in time. God be good to Michael's soul."

X

The priest turned from the altar and delivered the Gospel to the people; he was a peasant and built on enduring primitive lines, but old age had overtaken him, and there was weariness and feebleness in his attitude and speech. He was translating the Gospel into the tongue of the people, and his labour gave the words a pathetic appeal. Earnestly and with effort he related the Gospel story, and the language he used, the speech of peasants and fishermen, brought one

THE GAELIC REVIVAL.

Irish school children in Gaelic Miracle Play St. Enda's Bi-lingual College, Rathfarnham.

(From a photograph.)

back to the Gospel age. He told the story of the Apostles' vision, the Saviour walking the waters, and the words, "Let fear not be on ye," seemed more intimate, more comforting in the endearing Irish speech. He preached for a while from the text, and then, without any lapse from earnestness or dignity, went on to speak about the crops, about the necessity for spraying the potatoes, about an offer made to the district through one of the Government Departments. Then he spoke for a while about the death of a man well known to all the people, a man who was of the priest's own blood and name. He returned to the Gospel text, and said again, feebly and heavily, "Let fear not be on ye."

The people did not disperse after mass; they waited about the village and near the chapel to attend the burial. The girls went into the houses in the village, and the young men stood together gossiping or telling stories. The devotees went into the house where the dead was laid out, and a few old men and women lingered in the chapel yard to repeat the traditional prayer on leaving mass:—

> "Christ, farewell, Mary, farewell!
> The Apostles keep me till I come again!"

It was a day that might have been consecrated to some village festival. The summer had come with warmth and light and ease, and the corn stood high in quiet attainment. The children were happy in their holiday dresses. Those beautiful Connacht children had nobler promise than the growing corn or the delightful day.

The coffin was borne out on men's shoulders, and

the people fell into order and moved after the bearers. Their way was across fields to a churchyard that held many generations of their dead. And now the children pulled woodbine out of the hedges and plucked the foxglove that stood high in the ditches. The procession moved as though the people were taking part in some grave idyll. In that procession one could see a representation of the life and history of peasant Ireland.

Old men tramped resolutely on. They lived by earnestness and hope, and their bowed shoulders and hanging, uncouth hands brought a religious element into the funeral procession. They looked as if they had been moulded by a common force, but many of them had come back to their little patch of land from the streets of New York, from the dockyards of England, from the factories of Scotland. Beside these old peasants walked men of a different world, their sons and nephews who were back from America for a season. These Irish-Americans looked prosperous and effectual, powerful of mouth and jaw. The people near the coffin were from the country towns; they were types of those who had profited by the social revolution. The young men of the peasantry looked keen and ready; they were exuberant on the surface, secretive in the depths. The young girls and the old women still wore the peasant shawl; amongst the women, too, there were returned emigrants, bringing with them dresses and fashions that were incongruous here. These women had marked individualities; they were the unconscious guardians of a civilisation that had been swept from all places except the hearth.

The coffin had been borne through the gate, and while the people were still crossing the fields they heard the lament for the dead. It rose suddenly, a savage abandonment to grief. Other voices joined in, and the *caoine* took on its rhythmical, monotonous form. The voice of the women became remote and unfamiliar, and then one heard the veritable cry that has gone up from every field in Europe and Asia, the cry that has a memory of all grief, the sorrow of fathers for their strong sons, the heartbreak of women for their husbands and homes, the desolation and despair of broken clans. The people entered the graveyard with that monotonous lament beating at their hearts. And now, in the beautiful Gaelic phrase, they were in the Meadow of the Dead. The grass was high and green over the ridges of graves, and ash trees with youthful branches and leaves joyous in the sunlight grew above the dead. A woman left the throng and hurried amongst the graves calling out to her dead. Then many went amongst the graves, some hurriedly, some slowly and reluctantly. Clay fell on the coffin of the newly dead, but the sound was lost in a general lamentation. Old and young, men and women, wept for their kindred. Some, in the vehemence of their grief, broke branches from the trees, and the green boughs of the ash were strewn upon the graves.

It was no longer a lament for one man dead, it was a mourning for the dead generally, for the fact of death. So thought one who moved amongst the graves, an onlooker. Then one figure brought the sorrow to his heart as with a direct utterance. This was the figure of a girl who knelt by a grave. She

was massively and nobly formed, and in her dark face there was an unrealised force, a slumbering passion. She belonged to the dark type that is called Spanish in the West of Ireland, which is Iberian perhaps, and belonging to the people whom the new-coming Milesians described as Firbolgs. She knelt by the grave of a young man, weeping silently, without the *caoine*.

XI

"We have 'Yanks' golore," the people of Connacht say, corrupting their Irish with that ugly word. At every market there are hard-featured men and groups of young women in hats and flounced dresses. A few of the men and women will settle down and become re-Hibernicised, but the great majority will take flight in September, returning to Chicago, New York, or Boston.

We are at a celidh (social gathering) in a little Connacht house. Two men are sitting apart, talking very quietly. Given a photograph of the pair, it would be hard to guess their nationality. They are both well dressed, showing good linen, with studs and links. The younger of the two, a man with veiled eyes, an olive face, and waxed moustache, looks like a South European. In regard to their surroundings both faces have detachment and reserve. They are talking in a language that is not English. The syllables are harsh and satirical in the mouth of the elder man; they flow on soft and elusive in the mouth of the youth. They are talking in Irish about

American elections and the subterranean politics of New York. The younger man rises, and as a stranger joins in the dance. The other sits in the corner, playing with his watch-chain and drinking his whisky. He is the son of the woman of the house, of that very active little woman who sits by the fire carding wool.

Peter Hanlon owns a saloon in New York, and this is his first visit home in ten years. He looks like a man who has dealt with the toughest elements. There is a streak of power in him which might turn to violence and oppression. He is an uneducated man and is often baffled on the plane of intellect, These defeats make him sullen at first, and afterwards cause him to exercise his satirical powers. Like most of the " Yanks " he is ostentatious of his wealth. It is known that he is on the look-out for a wife from amongst the country girls. He does not want any woman who has been in America. He remains aloof from the entertainment, but occasionally he is taken by the verse of a song or a name in an anecdote. It is a curious fact that he has more of the folk-songs than the young men who have remained at home. He has intimacy with the old life, for the reason that in America he lives amongst the people of his village ; he remembers songs, anecdotes, and characters because he has had no new mental or emotional experiences.

A stranger in the house, a girl who is an instructress in lacemaking, ventures on the remark that people should strive to stay in Ireland. Peter Hanlon turns on her. " Why would anyone stay here ? There isn't potatoes and salt for the people. There is nothing here but starvation." He rises and throws

open the door. "Do you see the lights below? I mind the time when there were dozens of lights where there are only three or four now." He speaks angrily, as if he had a grievance against Ireland and were glad of the loss of its population. To suggest that there are possibilities in the country is to detract from his success. Men like Peter Hanlon come back amongst a people who knew them as bare-footed boys running the roads, and they feel that their superiority must be unquestioned. They think of Ireland as a stepmother who starved and degraded them. They think of America as a country that arouses their will and their strongest capacity. To them Ireland is a futile little Island subject to a people more foreign to Irish-America than Germans, Poles, or Hungarians. They think that the people of Ireland live on doles from American relatives, and that their political movements are mere excuses for getting contributions from the States. Peter Hanlon is angry that he should be challenged amongst the peasants. He goes into the room and is joined by the other "Yank," his cousin. They sit down to a silent game of cards.

Meanwhile the life of the little cabin goes on. Michael, Peter's young brother, sits on the settle, occasionally joining in the talk. He is a soft-looking young man who spends his life on the little farm. The fields are so small that a plough cannot be used on them, and all the labour has to be done with Michael's spade. Out of the cold of the evening two little girls come. They are the grandchildren of the old woman. Bare-footed, they have been herding the cows along the empty road. Now the cows have

CONNEMARA PEASANTS WATCHING RACES.
(From a photograph.)

come home and the children sit down to the warmth and gaiety of the evening. More visitors come to fill up the little place; two of the girls are "Yanks." They have loud voices, and they mix American slang with their Irish and English. Their speech and manners are an intrusion, but these girls are devoted daughters and sisters whose earnings have kept homes together. The devotion of the emigrant—a devotion to family, not to country—shows best in the women. The girls are anxious to talk with the teacher, and their conversation reveals an extraordinary ignorance of Ireland. They are interested to hear that Dublin has a population of some hundred thousands, that the streets are paved, that electric cars run in the city. They know something of American institutions and American history, but of Irish ideals and Irish history they know nothing. One of the girls has read about Robert Emmet in an American newspaper. Parnell and Daniel O'Connell are names to them. The "Yank" girls are less youthful than girls of the same age who stay at home. They look worn. Many of them who come on a visit are anxious to marry and settle at home. Their savings make a fortune larger than the dowries that go with the daughters of the smaller farmers, but in spite of their dowries the young men do not regard them as desirable matches. Their life in America has aged them, and they have come to dislike the crudeness of the farm. The girls, servants in good American houses, have an effect on the domestic economy of the country. They bring in better cookery, and they initiate better household arrangements. Generally, on their return, they bring a brother or sister with them.

Meantime the "Yanks" are six weeks from September, when they return on the big liner. The girls contrive to amuse themselves, but towards the end they become restless for the start. The men attend the fairs and markets, and in the intervals try to give themselves the illusion that the village public-house is a New York saloon. Peter Hanlon stays in his mother's cabin, and sometimes he tries to evoke an interest in the turf and the pigs. He stands in one of the little fields, behind a wall of loosely piled stones, a heavy look on his face.

XII

A girl whom I knew came into the shop I frequented when in that part of the West of Ireland. Her greeting was constrained and she stood silent and apart, with a shawl across her head. She had taken me to many festivities during the months I was in that place. I came over and spoke to her in Irish: "When will there be a dance in your village," I asked. "There's a dance to-night," she said, "if you would care to come." "Is it at the Stones?" "No, it's at our house. It's the night of my own wake."

She did not use the word in its generally accepted sense. In some of the Irish-speaking districts the word "Wake" has come to signify the last gathering around the boy or girl who is leaving the village for Boston or New York. Grania was in the shop, to buy provisions for her American wake. I had seen another part of Peasant Ireland denuded of its vitality by emigration, and I thought of Grania as typical

of the robust, handsome and high-spirited youth, who go away and become lost in the commonness of America or return to Ireland for a while, vulgarised and dissatisfied. She bade good-bye to those in the shop and gave me the word to come with her. Our path was between walls of loose stones that went across a country strewn with boulders. On account of these bare surfaces of rock the landscape was toned with greyness. There was no luminary in the early night; the full moon was gone and the new moon had not made its appearance. It is customary in this part of the country to use the English word "village" as the equivalent of their area of community. But the picture brought up by the word has no relation to their scattered hamlet. The houses were scattered through miles of uneven territory, and no roof was visible from the door of another house.

We met Grania's mother before we came to the house. She was one of those women who smile as though they did not understand what was happening or what was being said. She was silent and smiled as though speech had been frightened from her. The father greeted me at the door and brought me to the circle that was round the fire. He was a stolid and silent man. Another old man at the fire spoke eloquently and passionately in Irish. "Every man has his rearing, except the poor Irishman. This is the way with him. When his children grow up, they scatter from him like the little birds." Grania had taken off her shawl and was busy in the household duties. There was some intensity in her manner, but she made herself pleasant and capable.

While I waited a remarkable person engaged me in polite conversation. She was a woman between fifty and sixty, with a wide-shaped mouth and tolerant worldly eyes. She had the manners of an aristocrat and the faculty of being amused by her fellow-creatures. Her manners were designed to show an overwhelming interest in the person whom she addressed, but it was hard to say whether she laughed with you or laughed at you. There was salt in her conversation, and she was witty in two languages.

Tea was served in the upper room, and I went there as the young people were beginning to arrive. This sleeping room was expressive of the influences that are changing Irish rural life. There was an open American trunk, and dresses sent from New York or Boston were lying on the bed. On the wall was a fine mirror that would have been in its place in the dressing-room of an actress. Visitors had been coming, singly and in couples, and on going back to the kitchen I encountered something like a mob. People were standing three-deep from the walls. I heard a discord of music and song, the clash of grave speaking with loud-tongued humour, of gossip and boisterous flirtation, of American nasals and full-sounding Gaelic vowels. The children crowded together in the recess of the wide chimney, and the old people kept going into and coming out of the inner room. People were speaking of a dance, but a stranger would wonder whether there was room for a dance between the dresser and the fire on the hearth, between the table and the meal bins. Grania drew out the partners for the girls, arranged the dance,

and induced a quiet man to play on the flute. The figures in the dance were complicated, but even the swinging of the partners was accomplished with safety.

After some rounds of dancing, songs were given. English words were most in the fashion. Some of the songs were in the Irish tradition, some had been brought home by the workers in Scotland or England, and some had come out of American music halls. I pressed for one of their own traditional songs. I could not make an advance in kind, but I recited a poem in Irish, and after that the company were inclined to my request. A young man whom I had noticed for his satirical powers stood up for the song. It was of the locality, and it satirised a person whose character had comic associations for the company. The narrative begins in the house of Shawn, the person satirised. It is in the middle of the night, and Shawn and his dependants are in their beds. Some one gives the alarm—the cow has gone astray. Shawn rises and in the dark gropes for his garments. And Shawn and his adherents are off on the quest. Alone he finds his cow. He waits till dawn, and then takes the homeward trail. Now he is in need of rest and refreshment. He comes to a lonely house and is admitted. A single woman entertains him, and a district, awakened by the commotion of the search, sees Shawn, the guileless man, leave the house at an ambiguous hour. To save the good name of the district he and the woman marry. In this way Shawn gets his wife. The song set forth a comedy of manners and it was received with applause. When it was over I discovered that the singer was the

maker, and that he was noted through the countryside for his stinging ranns. A young and handsome boy sang another ballad in Irish. It was the lament of a man who had been put into prison, "Not for killing, not for stealing, but for making the brew that pays no duty." "My hair was cropped round my ears, and ugly clothes were put upon me. For nine months I was there, without company, without music." The last phrase was a flash of the Celtic spirit. It brought to my mind a romance of the Heroic Age, in which one of the Fianna complains, "For three days we were in the pit without food, without drink, without music."

The night wore on with dance and song, with challenge and repartee. Grania left us and stayed in the upper room for a while. When she returned she was in wild spirits and set about forming another dance. The orchestra was changed for this. She brought down a fiddle and a young man undertook to play. Only the wildest spirits were in this last dance that was on the skirts of the creeping day. Before the dance ended Grania's brother went from us, and we saw him take the harness down from the wall. It was an action as significant as anything in drama. The dance went on, but we heard the stamp of the awakened horse and the rattle of the harness as the conveyance was made ready for the journey. The dance fluttered out. Through the little window the trees became visible, then we saw colour, the green of the grass and the green of the leaves. Grania left the revellers and went into the room where her mother was busy. All of us who were in the kitchen went outside, so that those who were parting

would have the place to themselves. In the morning world the corncrakes were crying through the meadows. They were quiet in the house now, and the chirrup of dawn made me wish for the overcoat I had left within. I went inside. After the vivid life I felt the emptiness of the kitchen: the fire had burnt to ashes and the broad light through the window was on the flame of the lamp. As I was going out Grania came down, dressed for the journey. The poor girl was changed. She was dazed with grief.

She sat on the cart that went down the stony road, and the remnant of the company followed. Further on they would meet more carts with other emigrants, boys and girls. The cart jogged itself on to the main road; as yet there was only a single figure on the way, a man driving a cow to some far-off fair. We bade good-bye to Grania and separated. On my way back I passed her house; it was soundless and closed in as if the house had not yet wakened into life.

XIII

It was in a village in the West of Ireland. Three men withdrawing themselves from the business of the fair gave themselves up to its festivity. The sympathetic bond was close, and now the common mind of the trio was disposed to regard itself as the arbiter of things musical. They had drawn a stranger piper to their station before Flynn's public-house, and they listened to his music with faces that might

have damped a musicians' enthusiasm. But the piper was blind.

He finished the piece and turned to his patrons with the ardour that was the very colour of his life. "There's the tune for you now," he cried, "and I couldn't play it better if you were to pay me a hundred pounds." Thomas Bacach, the lame flute-player, removed a pipe from his own mouth and said deliberately, "We're not going to pay you a hundred pounds, and I can tell you that we have heard that tune better played." Kavanagh and young O'Hart concurred; they could say that they had heard the playing of them that were of the breed of pipers, the Griffins and the Joyces.

"I won't ask for the hundred pounds this time," said the blind piper,' "but give me the little provision for the road."

The flute-player had silver in his pocket since Sunday's dance, and he was content to patronise the strange musician. "We're not done with you yet," said he. "We think that from the look of you, you could give us a good song."

The musician had another in the audience besides his three patrons. A slovenly-looking old man had been standing in the background, he shuffled up to the musician now, and stood beside him, panting like an old sheep. "Who's there?" cried the piper, turning his attentive face on the ignoble apparition. The pauper's bag hung across the old fellow's back, and a shrivelled, shaking hand was upon his staff.

"Who is he?" said the flute-player. "A poor man that gets his living here and there. Lift up the song now, and let us hear the words of it, straight

and plain." With a little preparation the musician began the lay. It was a dramatic recitation rather than a song. The piece was in Irish, and it told of a man who meets a woman of The Other People, a fairy woman who proffers love to him. Told by the piper the narrative was convincing, for his ardour created the scene before you, and besides, he looked like one who might have met with such an adventure. He had the face of one who lived in the poet's intellectual world, and age and blindness had left him heroic, childlike, and glad. He related how the man of the adventure became in dread, now dispraised himself by saying that he was peevish and ill-mannered and without the power of pleasing women. The musician went on, but it was soon apparent that he had wandered into another narrative. "Easy now," said Thomas Bacach, "tell us what the fairy woman did to the man."

"Begob, I'm past that," said the piper.

If you had been watching the old pauper you would have said that a muddied thaw had set in within his brain, and that the pressure was like to burst his eyeballs. Looking absurdly fierce he said: "She—sh— said it's—it's—a wonder you talk to me like that——"

"That's it," cried the piper. "It's a wonder you talk to me like that, you knowing all the great kings I have destroyed." He went back to the mortal's excuses, and finished the poem with its fine imaginative climax. He tucked the pipes under his arm and stretched out his hat, gaining pence apiece from his patrons. He put out his arm for guidance and the pauper touched his hand. "Put me on the high

road, kind man," said the piper. "But sure I ought to know these roads well."

So together they mounted the road, two old men with staffs in their hands. Whiteness was on the hair and beards of both. The musician, for all his power and erectness, was not much younger than the man with the bag. The years had ennobled his face, giving it a more clear outline, a colour nearer to marble. In his face there were ardours and intellect and the beauty of the creature that had never submitted to yoke. His eyeballs, far-sunken in his head, were astonishingly contracted. Those blinded eyes, the lines of his features that suggest remote ways, gave the face a strangeness that had in it something repellent. The man beside him was of the average humanity, one without excess of will or excess of intellect, one prone to follies, prone to pieties. The pauper's bag hung across his back, and all the things that affront humanity had overtaken him—age, neglect, and decay. His face was without determination of outline, his clothes were slovenly and dirty, and yet he had a dignity that made a real pathos. This man, surely, had drunken at the same breast as yourself. And now as he went on with the other, tears streamed down his face.

"O Myles, *a-Gradh*," said he. "Are you blind altogether, Myles?"

"Who's that?" cried the blind man. "Is it John? Is it my brother John? Well now, isn't this the queerest thing that ever happened?"

"Are you blind, Myles? Can you see at all?"

"I have a glim—just a glim of sight. And was

it you, my brother, that they mentioned as the poor man ? "

" I'll—I'll whisper it to you, Myles. I've—I've the bag on my back."

" And your hand, John ? What came over this hand ? "

" It—it withered up on me."

The pair had been standing on the road, but now the restless temper of the blind man urged him forward again. He put the stick before him, saying, " I've to be at the pattern at Moylena to-morrow. I'm staying to-night at Crossgar, at the house of one of the MacInerney's."

" Is it Brian MacInerney's ? "

" Ay, Brian MacInerney's. It's a long time since you saw me, John. It's about a score of years, I think."

" A score of years," said John. " It's a score of years and more. Wasn't it at the time when the Prussians and the French were at war ? "

" It was," said Myles. " I was gathering up horses for French George and I met you in the town below."

John's brows were bristling again, giving him that look of absurd fierceness. " Michael Joyce was in the town and we went into his house, and we had a drink together."

" Ay, in troth."

" I tell you it's more than a score of years. It's nearly two score years."

" No matter for that," said Myles. " I came back again from France, and I was concerned with horses again for a term of years. My eyesight failed me then, and I took to the road with the pipes."

"And had you any rearing, Myles?"

"A couple of sons, but they scattered East and West on me. One of them joined the English and got killed in their bloody wars."

"I had the one son. He married—married a woman, do ye see."

"Ay, surely."

"And the woman dealt in a shop—buying things—things that weren't wanted, maybe."

"I see."

"And it fell out that we owed the shop as much as twenty pounds."

"The price of a horse, bedad."

"And—and—they put us out of the holding, do ye see?"

"Who put ye out? Was it the landlord?"

"The Court—the Session Court—do ye see."

"And where are you living now, John?"

"I'm not living with them, I tell you—I'm not living with my son and his woman. They's put me out across the door."

"And how are you situated, John?"

"The neighbours built me a hut — they didn't like me to be sleeping in their houses, do ye see—an oul' man by the fire—it isn't nice. They'd come together on a Sunday and build up a little place for me—putting the one stone on top of the other, do ye see. Well, there's a spark of fire there, anyway."

"Maybe, I'll go up with you, John."

"Do, *a-Gradh*. Here is the turn. Up this little road."

"Faith, I know this way well. Now, what am I

thinking about? Una Paralon used to live up there when she was a girl."

"Now, aren't you great to remember that."

"Is it far up to the hut, John?"

"A couple of turns above the place where the Paralons lived."

"It's a long road and a stony road, John. No, John, I won't go up."

"I've a bit in the bag and I'll put a spark of fire under the pot. Come up to my little house, *a-Gradh*."

"No, John. Step down a bit of the road with me. I'm feeling lonesome. They say, John, that after you go rambling one place is just the same as another."

"Maybe they're not right, Myles."

"They're not right, John. Look up at the sky, John and tell me if it's going to rain?"

"It's not going to rain. Maybe you'd best be going now while you've the blessed light."

"I'm going on now, John. The blessing of God with you."

"The dear blessing of God with you, brother."

Along the road between two bogs the blind man went, fine and erect in the evening light, and the man watching him stood as motionless as the old horse turned out into the field.

XIV

The Flute Player's Story

There is a road in Connemara which seems to have been invented by some racial spirit, so that the Wanderlust might be perpetuated in us. When you

set foot on that road you must go on till the sense of its infinity wearies you. You stop, but your spirit is still upon the road. Sometimes you meet people, women generally, driving asses. They are in twos and threes making some journey together. Once I asked one of these women where the road went when it crossed the hills. She had never heard. I asked her what was the nearest town along the road. She gave it a soft monosyllabic name. I asked her how long, in her opinion, it would take me to get to that town, walking. She said, in Irish, "My treasure, if you were to set out now (it was in the early afternoon), you would be in the town with the daylight." I never reached the town with the soft monosyllabic name. One day I went far along the road. I had passed where the lake, a wide, sailless stretch of water, had made a beach for itself. There was a wide bog on both sides of me, and before me were the silent enfolding hills. I saw a huddled figure by the grass of a ditch. Before I came near it a cyclist-policeman had swooped down, and the figure was on its feet. A man stood in the middle of the road swaying about, a corpulent figure, big and round of stomach. I perceived that his chin had many folds, that his eyes were small and dead-looking, that in spite of his watch-chain, his manners were obsequious. I could not rid my mind of the impression that this man was somehow connected with the sea. Yet it was impossible to imagine such a creature on board ship. He was of the docks rather than of the ocean. He might be a person who had drowsed and fattened in some little marine store. Evidently the policeman wanted the man to move somewhere; yet there were

three very good reasons for the man's inertia. In the first place, he was as gross as matter; in the second place, he was lame of a leg; in the third place, he was drunk. I heard the policeman ask him where he had spent the previous night. The man, bringing, as it were, thought-particles from afar off, informed the law that the town of Ballinasleeve was his last abiding place. Ballinasleeve is in the inhabited country which I had just left behind. "And are you a tradesman?" asked the policeman. With ponderous gravity the man replied, "Well, no, sir, I am not a tradesman. I am a musician, a strolling musician. Sir, I play upon the flute."

A musician! A strolling player! One that made music on a flute! If incongruity is humour, here was comedy indeed. The policeman spoke out of a great amaze! "A musician—a strolling player! Do you tell me that?"

"Sir," said the man, "why would I be deceiving a policeman? Here is my instrument." He took out of his breast-pocket a flute. The policeman examined it incredulously, while the strolling player, hat in hand, wiped his head with a red pocket-handkerchief. His bald head shone in the evening sun.

"Can you play on this?" the policeman inquired.

"I can," said the musician. "Drunk or sober I can play upon a flute. Sometimes I can play better than at other times. I could play better after a sleep." The policeman gave him back the flute. The man turned to go. He turned towards Ballinasleeve and the abodes of men.

"Stop," said the law. "I thought you told me that you had spent the night in Ballinasleeve?"

"Yes, sir; I spent the night in the town of Ballinasleeve."

"Well, then, move the other way," said the policeman. He mounted the machine. The man swayed about. Then he moved some paces in obedience to the edict. I noted that the policeman had risen above local and temporal law. He had expressed the eternal and universal law. "You must move to live." In obedience to this the artist took a few steps into the wilderness. Then he plunged forward, and lay face downwards in the ditch. I went on, meditating on the Law.

. . . . . .

Coming back along the road I heard the sound of a flute. The artist was playing to some workers in a far-off bog. His head was bare and shining. The red handkerchief was about his neck. He had worked himself into a mild ecstasy, and was capering about on the road. He sat down by the side of the road. I went and sat near him.

"It's well for you that has the music," I said to him in Irish.

"The music that I play is not the best of music," said the man, speaking in Irish also. "But the people of the country like it."

"You have good Irish," I said, "but I don't think you're a Connaught man."

"I'm a long time on the roads of Connaught," he said. I asked the man for the time. He drew out a large silver watch, and told me the hour. I watched the mountain across the lake. The side of it was brown, steeped in the rays of the sun.

The little bunches of sheep seemed to crawl up and down. I loafed, and invited my soul to loaf. I talked to the musician about fiddles, flutes, and that musical instrument which is becoming national and typical in the province of Connaught, the melodion. The man's soul was not on fire for his art; he talked about it in the most objective and material way. He was certainly no Connaught man. His brain did not fling out words joyously. No word he said hinted the man's dream of himself. There he sat by the side of the road, talking, as if newly taken out of some dark little hand-me-down shop, or some little eating-house, that had for a sign the cup and saucer. Still we gossiped for a long time. At last there was movement on the road. A van was going towards Ballinasleeve, one of these wagons that hold the side show of a fair, and is a travelling house beside it. It was a red van with a little flue, drawn by a small and tired horse. A man and woman walked behind the van, and I recognised them for Mr and Mrs Antinous, circus people, and friends of mine. The flute player recognised them too, and the recognition brought a dull, malignant look to his face. The couple drew near, Mrs Antinous was a heavy figure, with a grotesque dress, stiff and black. Her husband was smoking and chirping as usual. How well I remembered Sammy, the Cockney husband of Mrs Antinous. Sammy was stone-deaf, but he apprehended certain things by a sort of heightened sensibility. Thus if you said, "What's the drinks?" or "The same again," Sammy drew himself from the remotest corner of the shop, and stood before the counter without a word. I observed the one horse with interest. When

I met the couple last in the County of Cavan the horses were five, and had recently been seven. Poor Mrs Antinous! Her state had shrunk to this little measure. She walked along stolidly, but to me she was a tragic figure.

They greeted me, and I stood talking to them for a while. The flute player remained, big and ugly, in the ditch. Mrs Antinous recognised him. She stopped her husband's idle chatter, and pointed out the musician. Sammy took the pipe out of his mouth, and twisted on his feet with a sort of pixie-glee. "It's William Ferguson," he said. "The missus' valentine," he said. "She's the honey-suckle and he's the bee; he, he, he!" Mr Antinous went over to the ditch. "How are you, William," he said. "It's a long time since we met, William." William remained in the ditch as silent as a frog of the marsh. Mrs Antinous gripped her protector by the hand, and led him away, but Sammy was irrepressible. He turned his head many times as they went down the road. "William," said he, "the missus and myself desires you to afternoon tea. We'll send the ambulance for you, William." The flute player by this time had gathered his words together, "Go on," said he, "yourselves and your one horse." He turned to me, as I came up, the dull, malignant look still on his face. "It's a hired horse, too," he said; "it's a horse of Flanagan's. Let her go. Maybe I'll stroll into the town to-morrow, and see what herself and him will be doing at the fair. They'll have a little stand, and bottles for the men to throw rings over for penknives and the like. They'll make little at that. There's little drinking in the town now.

The whole country has the mission-pledge. Where there isn't drinking there isn't sport, and it's no good having a shooting range or a little gallery. They're very low in the world. Would you believe it, sir, I once offered myself in marriage to that woman ?

" You've probably heard about me from certain parties that you are acquainted with, but one story is good until another is told. My name is William Ferguson. I'm from Scotland. I came from the city of Paisley. I was barbering for a while, but I was sacked from that because the proprietor thought I wasn't sociable enough as a barber. Then I was in the betting line, but the police came against me there. I came to Ireland with a gang of harvesters. I played for them on the flute. Then I settled down to live in Connaught. I got a bed here and there, and the people gave me the bit to eat. They have dances at certain places at this time of the year, and they make up a little collection for the musician. As to the woman gone by, I met her after I was a while in Connaught. She was a young widow then, with a husband after dying on her. Her husband was a man you may have heard of. Sarsfield was his name.

" This Sarsfield died, and his widow would be well off if a woman could manage the circus business. She had a tarpaulin that would cover a field. It was worth a lot of money. She had an organ worth close on £50. It was played by steam. She had fifteen horses. I heard about Mrs Sarsfield in a house where I was taking a drink, and I thought that a job under her would be worth something. I went

round, and asked for a job, and she put me collecting at the tent. She put another man to watch me. I held on to the job. You know, sir, that every man likes to settle down in life, and for that reason I had thoughts of marrying Sarsfield's widow. I stood a likely chance. A woman can't look after a circus. The men that a woman will pay can't be relied on. It's the same in the barbering business. It's the same in all lines of business, except a pawn-shop. Now a circus is the most difficult line that a woman could handle, because she has to watch both men and horses. I used to say to myself, ' You'll have to marry again, my good woman.' I had a good hand with horses, and that's curious when you think I was born and bred in the city of Paisley. However it is, the horses turn their heads to me when I walk down the street. I took charge of that woman's horses. It's likely she'll deny it now, but I tell you, sir, the horses kept in good shape while I had my hand on them. She couldn't help but notice how careful I was of her property. I mentioned marriage to her in a kind of a way, and in a sort of a way she let me know she wasn't ready for it. But she soon saw the way that things would go, and by degrees I prepared her mind for marriage. There was no arrangement between us. There was a sort of an agreement. There was no one except myself she could marry, and she'd have to marry soon.

" It's not the way of men to see anyone else get ahead of them in any way. The other men got jealous of me, and they'd never miss a chance of doing an injury to me. They used to leave me to bring the horses to the river by myself. It's hard for a lame

man to be legging it after horses. I used to have to give pennies to the boys of the town to give me a hand with the horses. They'd get them down to the river, and draw the water, and I'd manage the horses. It was while I was attending the horses one day that Antinous came up, and offered to give me a hand. He was a poor raggy fellow without a boot on his foot. He was sacked out of the swinging-boat business. I knew by the way that he touched horses that he was never used to live animals. I couldn't shake him off, for the man was deaf, and consequently gave no heed to my sayings. He brought the horses up to the tent, and was there before me. Mrs Sarsfield was at the van, and he was standing before her, bowing like the clown, and pattering away. He said she was the prairie flower, and mind you, the woman listened to him, though she could have heard the same thing in the ring any night."

"I suppose she gave Antinous a job?" I said.

"She gave him a job," said my friend the flute player. "I think he begged the job off her. He told her he had no mother. She gave him the job, and he and me used to take the horses to the water every day. He knew nothing about horses. I let on to be sick one day, and I let him take the horses to the river by himself. It was a stony place. The horses' legs would have been broken only for some of the men gave Antinous a hand out of the ill-will they had for myself. When he came back Mrs Sarsfield brought him into tea. I didn't do a hand's turn for her that day, nor the next day, nor the day after. She came out to me then. Mind you, I didn't want to lose my job, but I told her she'd have

to get rid of Sammy Antinous, or else part with myself. If she could see what would happen to her horses she would have given in. But that wasn't to be seen.

"The end of the story happened in the town of Crossgar. There is a shop there owned by a widow woman of the name of Molloy. When I was in the town I did nothing, but I often used to go into Mrs Molloy's, and have a few glasses to myself without anyone to disturb me. This night I went in. I had the flute in my hand, and I made my way over to the counter. Before I sat down I looked round, and I saw Sammy Antinous and Mrs Sarsfield sitting on a bench. Sammy asked me to have a drink, but I refused him. I turned round, and I offered Mrs Sarsfield what was becoming to a lady, a glass of wine. She accepted my offer, and Sammy carried over the glass to her. I didn't drink anything myself, but I sat and watched her for a long time. 'Mrs Sarsfield,' I said to her, 'this young man can't hear us, so we may as well talk now. Look at him and look at me. He has no head, Mrs Sarsfield. I'm weak on the legs, but my head is sound. If you want to keep your horses sound marry me, and let me look after them.' She didn't drink at all, but she sat there very miserable. 'I don't know how it is,' she said, 'but I'm more used to this young man than I'm used to you.' Sammy was trying to listen all the time. 'I'm as used to horses,' he said, 'as horses are used to oats. I was managing horses when I was only up to William's leg.' 'They were wooden horses,' said I. 'He'll soon get used to live horses, Sammy will,' said the woman. She was very foolish. To the

present time Sammy Antinous treats all manner of living horses as if they were wooden horses. Sammy got up to go to the counter, and I saw that Mrs Sarsfield slipped the money into his hand. I knew she'd have him after that, and there was no use in me waiting on. I turned to that woman, and I spoke words to her that brought the blush to her face. 'Ma'am,' said I, 'I'm sorry to see you behave in the way that a respectable woman would not behave. You're marrying that young man, not that he might keep your little business together, not that he might be a protection to you, not that he might look after your horses. You're marrying him out of the passion of women,' I said; 'and, mark my words, you will call the day cursed. Babylon fell,' I said, 'and Rome fell, and the Scarlet Woman of Rome fell, and you'll fall likewise.' I said no more. I let them go out. I drunk small whiskies, and when I wakened they were gone from the town. At the next station my words became true. A horse broke its leg at the watering-place. Ever since they lost horses, one here, and two there. She's going into the town now with a hired horse, without a tarpaulin, and without an organ. I doubt if she'll make enough to get the van drawn out of the town."

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The flute-player ended his story as the wandering moon lifted its fantastic shape above the lake.

XV

The Ballad-singer

Market-day in the little Connacht town; it is afternoon, and business is spasmodic. A man, standing in the wide street, is singing a ballad in a voice trained for distance and the open air. He is in descent from the wandering minstrels, and his class has been kept alive by the excitements in rural Ireland. He belongs to a fraternity still very numerous. Their palmy days are over, however, for things have become more settled, and the ha'penny newspaper has arrived. Generally the minstrels carry with them a sheaf of ballads which they retail. Who writes these ballads that circulate from Donegal to Cork and from Dublin to Galway? Sometimes the authors are known. The ballads, in the main, are written by anonymous people, by shopkeepers, by schoolmasters, by policemen. Their place of publication has a curious proximity. It is in Kilmainham, a place notable for the detention of political prisoners. The man in the street is without scripts. He is singing a ballad that has been on the road for over a hundred years:—

"And what colour will they wear?
Says the Shan Van Vocht.[1]
And what colour will they wear?
Says the Shan Van Vocht.
What colour will be seen
Where their fathers' homes have been
But their own immortal green?
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

[1] "The Poor Old Woman," a "secret" name for Ireland.

What colour will be seen
Where their fathers' homes have been
But their own immortal green
Says the Shan Van Vocht."

The singer is a lame man. He is heavily built, wears a cap, and holds a stick in his hand. A roll of scarlet round his neck expresses something in the man—a certain rawness of life and crudeness of artistry. The song finished, he crosses the street and makes his way into the public-house. With its crowd, the interior is a replica of the market. The people talking and drinking have been the ballad-singer's audience. He goes to the counter that crosses the upper end of the shop, and stands waiting on their attention.

The ballad-singer takes off his cap. His big head is bald and his face is clean shaven. The big face has many protuberances on it. The nose looks like copper, and the face looks as if it had been burnished. The small knowledgable eyes watch the crowd attentively, but without any flash or eagerness. A tumbler of porter is given him, and the minstrel sits down on the end of a barrel. He salutes each person in the shop, drinks a little porter, and having gained some attention, begins a song. The ballad is adapted to the audience. It relates the adventures of a band of Connacht labourers in England. The ballad begins :—

"Then we sailed away across the bay, and we never received a shock,
Till we landed safe and fairly reached the noble Clarence Dock.
Then away we went with one intent, and we drank strong ale and wine,
And we toasted then oul' Irelan' and the girls we left behin'."

He sings with great liveliness, using the short end of his stick like a conductor's baton, as though the song were the score and the crowd the orchestra. The song is a success, and a good many coppers are contributed. He says "Three cheers for Connemara, three cheers for Westport, three cheers for the place where we are." A man who has been drinking cries out in Irish, "And a health to Mayo, the county that's best in Eirinn." Facing the countryman, the ballad-singer begins the popular Gaelic song "Condae Mhuig-eo." The countryman sings the words aggressively and for the sake of order the publican intervenes. The ballad-singer discreetly withdraws.

Towards evening he presents himself at Mrs Jordan's, where non-stimulating commodities such as draperies and groceries are sold. Some women and one or two quiet men are in the shop. The minstrel enters as rather on a visit than a professional call. Mrs Jordan is showing girls some ribbons, and the ballad-singer permits himself to speak of her. "She's of a good family," he says; "she's a woman of the Lacys. My mother belonged to the Lacys, and I'm proud of it." He has had refreshments since he came into the town, but the various treats have left him mellow of spirit and easy of manner. He sits down on a chair and addresses himself to each person in turn. "Mrs Coyne, you're looking well; may God preserve you, ma'am." "And how is your good man, Mrs MacGowan?" The chance customer in the shop is not left outside his interest. "How is your friend, your companion, your noble friend, Mr Jennings?" He asks Mrs Jordan's permission to entertain the company. She

signifies her approbation by leaning her elbows on the counter. His song is suited to the gentility of the company—

" As I rowed out one morning all in the month of May,
Down by the Sally Gardens I carelessly did stray.
I overheard a fair maid as she in sorrow did complain,
' It was on the Banks of Clady my darling did remain.'

' This is the Banks of Clady, fair maid, whereon you stan',
Do not depend on Johnny for he's a false young man.
This is the Banks of Clady, but he'll not meet you here,
But tarry with me in yon green wood where no danger you need fear.'

' If my Johnny was with me here this night he'd keep me from all harm,
But he's in the field of battle all in his uniform.
But he's in the field of battle, his foes he does destroy
Like a roaring King of Armies going to the wars of Troy.'

' And it's six months now and better since your Johnny left the shore,
He was crossing the main Ocean where the flowing billows roar.
He was crossing the main Ocean for honour and for fame,
As I've been told his ship was wrecked all off the coast of Spain.'

And when she heard the bitter news she flew into despair
With the wringing of her hands and the tearing of her hair,
Saying ' If Johnny he be drowned no man on earth I'll take,
Through lonesome groves and valleys I'll wander for his sake.'

And it's when he saw her loyalty he could no longer stan',
But falling in her arms he said ' Betsy, I'm the man.
I'm that inconstant young man that caused you all the pain,
And I'm now come back to Clady, and we'll never part again.' "

The song is received with favour, and the singer adds some coppers to his stock. He goes out to the festivity of the town.

It is evening, and the people from the market are dribbling along the road. A barefoot child drives a donkey that has a sack of meal across its back. A cart crowded with people comes along. Then three or four women gossiping together. The mountain horses pass on, on the back of each a man, with a woman seated on the pillion behind him. With his cap off and his red muffler hanging across his coat, the ballad-singer is seated on a grassy ditch. He is in a happy frame of mind. He tells us that he is as correct a man as he knows how. We assure him of our regard, and he drinks to us, repeating the Connacht toast, which we will set down here :—

Slan agus seaghal agat;
Bean ar do mhein agat;
Talamh gon chios agat,
Agus bās in Eirinn.

Health and life to you;
The woman of your choice to you;
Land without rent to you,
And death in Erinn.

PART IV

THE CRISIS IN IRELAND

I

The Crisis

Many English people and some politically uninstructed Irish people are of the opinion that for Great Britain and Ireland the administration is uniform. But the words "union" and "United Kingdom" and the very full Irish representation at Westminster mask the fact that the administration of Great Britain and the administration of Ireland form distinct types of government. In England each great department is represented by a Cabinet Minister who is responsible to a national parliament. In Ireland all the departments are represented by the Chief Secretary who is responsible to a parliament, which, in so far as it is national for Great Britain, is removed from Irish opinion and Irish interests. The government of Great Britain and the government of Ireland are fundamentally different—one emanates from a people and the other is imposed upon a people; one is organic and the other is mechanical. "To look behind mere technicalities to the spirit of Government," says Mr Erskine Childers, "Ireland resembles one of that class of Crown Colonies of which Jamaica and Malta are examples, where the inhabitants exercise no control over administration and only partial control over legislation." Mr Childers again and again mentions

the Colonial as the type of Irish Government. Like all colonies, Ireland has a Governor or Lord Lieutenant of her own, an executive of her own, and a complete system of Government departments; but her people, unlike the inhabitant of a self-governing colony, exercise no control over the administration. It is true that Ireland has a large representation at Westminster, and that this representation is supposed to give her sufficient legislative control over Irish affairs. Mr Childers notes that this control can be exercised only by cumbrous, circuitous and often profoundly unhealthy methods, and that over a wide range of matters it cannot by any method whatsoever be exercised at all. The Chief Secretary is "a transitory and embarrassed phantom," and the government of Ireland in operation consists of Boards, the number of which is estimated as between forty-two and sixty-seven. As far as the Irish people are concerned these Boards have neither a soul to be saved nor a body to be kicked. With one exception, perhaps, they are immune to Irish opinion. The decrees of the Parliament at Westminster may not affect them. The Board of Intermediate Education, for instance, can defy and has defied a resolution of the House of Commons. The Boards are unpopular, unrepresentative and irresponsible; they are also mighty expensive. They billet 100,000 persons upon the Irish state, and they absorb four millions a year in pay and pensions. Unfortunately to eyes accustomed to gigantic figures of British Revenue and Expenditure, this sum will not seem startling. But to an inhabitant of a country to which Ireland might fairly be likened, to a Dane or a Belgian, to a Por-

tuguese or a Greek, four million pounds must appear a monstrous amount.

The revenue raised in Ireland is large when compared with the revenue raised in the minor European States. It is between ten and twelve million pounds. Out of this revenue Ireland has been contributing a handsome surplus to the Imperial Exchequer. But according to recent Treasury Returns this surplus has disappeared, and the British Exchequer must now give a contribution to make up the difference between Irish Revenue and Irish Expenditure.

It would be well to make clear the cause of the Irish deficit. Great Britain adopted Old Age Pensions on a scale commensurate with her ample resources and proportionate to standards of earning and spending amongst an industrial population. But the Irish Revenue is not ample and the cost of Irish administration is very high. To pay old age pensions on the British scale, Ireland has to overdraw her account. Hence the deficit. It should be noted, too, that in Ireland the people are country-dwelling, and their standards of earning and spending is much lower than amongst the urban population of Great Britain. A labourer at seventy has more as pension than he had as pay at thirty. And in Ireland the number of claimants is out of proportion to present population, because they are the remains of eight million people. The deficit may not lessen so long as present arrangements continue. It is bound to grow with the adoption in Ireland of National Insurance and other social measures promoted in Great Britain.

What is to happen now? According to the Irish Unionist, Great Britain must go on paying the difference between Irish Revenue and Irish Expenditure. He maintains that the revenue of Great Britain and Ireland is to be regarded as a household's income. Ireland by right can draw on the British Exchequer for millions per annum. The bigger the deficit the better for Ireland, because an unearned sum is handed across and spent amongst the Irish people. The Irish nationalist will not acquiesce to this arrangement. The deficit, he says, is expressive of the disharmony between the relations of the two countries. Make a change in these relations; allow Ireland so much control over her resources as will allow her, in a definite time, to balance her revenue and her expenditure. This is the Home Rule solution.

When I have written this I feel I must answer the arguments of the English reader of this book. I imagine that he or she has in her mind the objections that I have read in English newspapers :—

The Reader. The creation of an Irish assembly with an executive responsible to it would be a departure in policy.

The Writer. The creations of such assemblies in Canada, and Australia, and in South Africa, were departures in policy.

The Reader. Home Rule would separate Ireland from Great Britain.

The Writer. The Union at present exists in words, not in facts. Ireland has always had a separate government. A self-governing Ireland would be a developing Ireland, that more than the present

Ireland would lean towards the source of capital and the centre of military and naval protection.

The Reader. A national Government in Ireland would form the standing plant of revolution.

The Writer. People do not hazard their every-day security for the mere sake of revolting. The attainment of national self-government is certainly worth a revolution. But where self-government has been attained a people become busy about developing their resources and creating a culture.

The Reader. A self-governing Ireland might want to enter into alliances with States hostile to Great Britain.

The Writer. For what reason? Some generations ago, Irishmen desired an alliance with France. But Irish affairs were quite intolerable then. France is no longer hostile to Great Britain, and Ireland has no affinities with any other European country.

The Reader. There are two peoples in Ireland. If we permitted a national government to be set up, affairs would eventuate in civil war.

The Writer. There is only one people in Ireland—the Irish people. There are Catholics, Protestants, and Presbyterians amongst them, and, owing to English interventions these denominations have different political tendencies for the moment. But when the question of Irish self-government is settled their differences will not be so broad. It is the struggle to gain self-government, and the struggle to retard self-government, that makes their differences emphatic. Let us talk about Belgium. Between Fleming and Walloon, Catholic and Liberal, there are differences more acute than between Catholic

and Protestant in Ireland. But there is no civil war in Belgium. Neither Fleming nor Walloon, Catholic or Liberal, wish to upset the equilibrium of their self-governing State.

The Reader. Most unaccountable things happen in Ireland—cattle-driving, boycotting, agrarian outrages. We never know of such things here.

The Writer. That is because Great Britain is not an agricultural but an industrial country. Your disputes are industrial not agrarian. If our agrarian situation had been stated in industrial terms, you would understand it. The Land League that you once read about was a tenants' trades-union. Boycotting was a sort of picketting. Cattle-driving was the nature of a strike against a monopoly. These phases in Irish life are nearly over now. If they reoccur a national government is best fitted to deal with them.

The Reader. You have not convinced me.

The Writer. I have only tried to illuminate some points in a controversy. This is my stopping-place. I get off here.

II

The Opposition in Ireland

In Ireland the opposition to self-government is in the coalition of Church of Ireland Protestants and North of Ireland Presbyterians. Each has a separate history. Now to realise the Protestant position we must begin by thinking of an ascendency

that was once as complete and as extensive as the late Manchu ascendency in China. Numbering one-tenth of the population, the Episcopalian Protestants at the close of the eighteenth century held five-sixths of the landed property of Ireland, occupied the magistracy and the corporations, had practically a monopoly in the professions, controlled the Parliament and the Government, enjoyed all the patronage and had a church-establishment to which the majority of their fellow-countrymen paid tithes. Since the first quarter of the nineteenth century great and successive rents have been made in the fabric of Episcopalian ascendency—Catholic Emancipation—Reform of the Corporations—Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland—Extension of the Franchise. Members of other religious denominations, having attained equality of opportunity, were taking places in the professions and in the public services. Local ascendency was broken up. In 1881 Legislation took a turn destined to plant the Catholic peasantry in the soil, and to leave the Protestant landowners a pensioned proletariat. The self-elected Protestant Grand Juries were replaced by properly elected local councils. To-day the Episcopalian Protestants number 575,487, to the Presbyterian 439,876, and the Catholic 3,238,656. They are the merchants and traders in Belfast, Dublin, Cork, Sligo, and the towns of Ireland. They are the "Society," as Society exists in provincialised Ireland. They have the places in the sun; the Episcopalian Protestants are the better half of that conservative element which is one-fifth of the population, and have more than half the places in the Bureaucracy. The Irish Privy Council

consists of 43 Episcopalian Protestants, 10 Catholics, 9 Presbyterians. As to the Lord Lieutenants or Deputy-Lieutenants of the Counties, 8 out of every 10 are Episcopalians. Why should they entertain the thought of a change in the government of Ireland? Thousands of individual Protestants of course are very strong nationalists, and, now and again, one hears the grave voice of a Protestant merchant or trader proclaiming that there is a necessity for some change in the government of the country, but, generally speaking, the Protestant body in Ireland is Conservative because it has something to conserve.

Walk up or down Molesworth Street in Dublin and notice the number of institutions for the advancement and the protection of Protestant interests in Ireland. There, engraved on plates of brass is the testimony to Protestant solidarity in Ireland. The Protestant body is closely held together by freemasonry, by Young Men's Christian Associations, by the Orange Societies and, above all, by the kindly and intelligent interest which members take in each other's worldly affairs. In Ireland the Protestants are a minority, but they are a compact and well-organised minority, and when one Protestant policeman is wronged the Irish Executive reels under the blows that is showered upon it. If they are sincere, the expressions of terror which one hears is incompatible with the Protestant position and the Protestant organisation. In a self-governing Ireland they may expect the position which the Huguenots have in present-day France.

That the Presbyterian farmers of Ulster are hostile to the movement for self-government is a bad testi-

monial to the statesmanship of the Nationalist leaders. The land struggle should have knit together the Presbyterian and the Catholic tenant-farmers. There were movements towards an understanding, but somehow they lacked the flaming sincerity that would have burnt away ancient hates and fears. The episode of the land war is now closed. They have never acknowledged them, but the benefits which the Presbyterian tenant-farmers have derived from the travail of Catholic Ireland cannot be forgotten. "It was the Home Rule Party which elevated the peasants of the four provinces from the condition of serfs to the position of men." So an eminent Protestant business man, Mr Richard Jones, writes in the columns of the Unionist *Irish Times*.[1] "Now, mark this striking coincidence," he continues. "In proportion as the Home Rule Organisation spread in the North of Ireland, so also declined the spirit of religious animosity, and outbreaks of faction. Men, still differing sharply in politics, and widely separated in religion, becoming freed from the pernicious influence and power of class interest, dwelt together in peace and friendship. Of all the provinces of Ireland, Ulster has profited the greatest by the Home Rule movement, owing to the existence of her manufacturing industries; every pound which the land settlement has added to the spending capacity of her agricultural population has gone to the benefit of her local industry. . . . The Nationalist leaders have laid upon Ulster a debt of gratitude which Ulster men will not be ungenerous enough nor unjust enough to repudiate."

[1] Letter from Mr Richard Jones, published November 1st, 1911.

Like the Catholic, the Presbyterian peasantry felt the oppression of the Episcopalian ascendency. Thousands of them were forced to leave their farms in Antrim and Down and emigrate to the American Colonies. Presbyterians and Catholics were in the ranks of the Northern United Irishmen who took the field in 1798. Wolfe Tone, the organiser of the United Irish movement wrote this note upon the Presbyterians :—" The Dissenters of the North, the more especially of the town of Belfast, are, from the genius of their religion, and from the superior diffusion of political information among them, sincere and enlightened Republicans. They had been foremost in pursuit of Parliamentary reform, and I have already mentioned the early wisdom and virtue of the town of Belfast in proposing emancipation of Catholics so far back as the year 1773." [1] But between the date of Wolfe Tone's entry and the outbreak of 1798, the Orange Society was founded. Lecky quotes a letter written by a gentleman in Omagh after the formation of the Orange Society in the district. It shows how the new line of cleavage was running counter to the schemes of the United Irish party.[2] " He mentions that after divine service he had been addressing a meeting of nearly 2000 Presbyterians on the necessity of forming volunteer corps in order to resist the French, and also ' the Belfast principle.' The strongest spirit of loyalty, he says, prevailed among them ; the hatred of Roman Catholics is very great, so much so, that should one be admitted they never would join with them, as

[1] Autobiography of Wolfe Tone.

[2] " Ireland in the Eighteenth Century," Vol. III.

a spirit of Defenderism and revenge exists in that body against the administration. This violent change has been wrought within a year—a change fraught with the best consequences for our King and Constitution." It is fair to say that the Orange Society seems to have been founded as a check to the Catholic Committees and Defender Societies. But it is difficult to apportion blame to Parties in those troublous times. The creation of the Orange Societies has had grave historical consequences. The Lodges were wedges between Catholic and Presbyterians, and arks in the alliance between Presbyterians and the Episcopalians. The Orange Societies were soon adopted by the landowners. It was an effective means of dividing tenants. In the manufacturing towns they keep Protestant and Catholic employees apart, and for that reason it is patronised by capitalists.[1]

The Presbyterian farmers, the people of the industrial towns and that nexus of population commerce and industry—Belfast—constitute what is called the "Ulster" opposition. The use of this whole large geographical term suggests that a large and important Irish province is opposed to the idea of self-government. The convenience of localising an opposition permits Irish nationalists to let the expression pass. But Ulster consists of nine counties—Donegal, Londonderry, Antrim, Down, Armagh, Tyrone, Monaghan, Fermanagh and Cavan. In the nine counties of Ulster, the Home Rule members are in a majority of one. There are two counties, Antrim

[1] Mr St John Ervine's play "Mixed Marriage" illustrates the use that Belfast employers make of sectarian animosity.

and London that vote Unionist; three counties Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal that are solid for Home Rule, four counties, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone, that together return seven Unionists and six Home Rulers. Sub-Ulster or North-East Ulster makes a term that gives a fair idea of the territorial opposition of self-government. The clenched fist of that opposition is Belfast.

What temper and what power is behind the clenched fist? I know Belfast and the North of Ireland only superficially, so I will let myself quote from an able and intimate article signed, "Ulster Imperialist," that appeared in the March number of *The Irish Review*. "The chief industries of Belfast, especially the linen, ship-building and rope-making industries are dependent for their existence on their export trade. The correspondence, the personal intercourse, the business interest of the average Belfast business man, are with England, Scotland, the Colonies or foreign countries. He has practically no direct communication with the rest of Ireland. He knows he can make a living under existing conditions, and he does not want an Irish Parliament." "Ulster Imperialist" notes that the manufacturers who depend wholly or mainly on the Irish market have more moderate opinions. Then there is the religious question. There are literally thousands of Ulster Unionists whose whole political creed is summed up in one sentence, "I would be a Home Ruler to-morrow only for the Church of Rome." Such a person agrees with every suggestion in favour of the widest measure of Home Rule, and then closes the discussion by saying, "But there would be a permanent majority

of Roman Catholics in Parliament, and I do not believe a Roman Catholic's word, even on oath."

Further, there is a small number of Ulster Protestants who quite sincerely believe that they would be burnt by an Irish equivalent of the Inquisition. "The reason why this little knot of honest fanatics have such influence over the rank and file is because, speaking broadly, the superior ranks among the Belfast workmen, skilled tradesmen, foremen and the like, are Protestants, whereas the labourers and the unskilled classes are largely Catholic. Consequently, Home Rule, to, say, a fitter earning high wages in an engineering shop, means a scheme whereby the unskilled labourers who work in the same shop would be placed in a position to dominate over him. He reasons from the only Catholics he knows to those he does not know, and he assumes that the Irish Catholics throughout the country are all like the unskilled labourers of Belfast." Let us note two other facts in the Belfast situation. North-East Ulster is the only part of Ireland dominated by rich men and by titled men. They distrust democracy as much as they distrust Irish nationalism. Further, as "Ulster Imperialist" points out, there are no young men on Sir Edward Carson's side. The leaders are the same men who fought the battle in 1893 and indeed in 1886.

Will Belfast always resist self-government for Ireland? A measure promoted by a Conservative Government would meet with little opposition. The local government act was as revolutionary as any measure of self-government is likely to be, and Belfast acquiesced to it because it was promoted by

a Conservative Government. But if the Bill introduced by the Liberals goes through, what will happen in Belfast and the North-East? According to "Ulster Imperialist," "once everyone was certain that a measure of self-government was inevitable, a great body of moderate opinion would separate itself from the extremists, and (though there would be no alliance with the Nationalist Party) would show the public that even in Ulster the King's government would be carried on. Would the Orange members of the North-East boycott the Dublin Parliament? The Protestants of the North and West would not be agreeable to such action.

When one has written so far, one has to write a little further. An Irish Parliament would probably be elected according to some scheme of proportionate representation. Protestants and Presbyterians would have due representation. The assembly would divide on the agrarian question and on the educational question. The conflict would no longer be between Protestants and Catholics, Nationalists and Unionists. Because this is not perceived, an illusion exists that a Catholic majority would persecute a Protestant minority in a self-governing Ireland.

III

A competence and a culture—to create one and develop the other is the ambition of every European State. But little can be done towards either without the discipline that comes from ruling and the sense of responsibility that comes from managing one's

own affairs. That has always been a truth for those who hold the Nationalist faith. Now more than ever, they think, there is a necessity for self-government. Every year increases the multitude of officials and pensioners: a parasitic Ireland is being imposed upon, and fundamental Ireland, and it is only by some exercise that Ireland can maintain her vigour and her self-respect. Meanwhile what is the great political fact? In Ireland there are three and a quarter million people who desire self-government. A Parliament with an executive responsible to it—this they regard as the symbol and sacrament of Irish nationality. In the present state of world politics the will of this people cannot be gainsaid. It has always been conceded that they have a high military courage, and that they are one of the intellectual peoples. A sociologist who knows his Europe will have another word to say about them. They have a religion that ensures racial power. The Catholic peoples root themselves in the soil and maintain an undiminished birth rate. Politicians have a further word to say. In the American Republic that is soon to become an enormous Pacific Power, they have a dominating influence. Behind this people there is a hundred years' success, and they have dismantled feudalism with more energy and thoroughness than any other people in Europe. . . . But I have divided that which should not be divided. In Ireland, Catholic, Protestant and Presbyterian are now compounded into a single people. A measure of self-government will leave no doubt of their community. "A mixture of races," says Davis, "is as much needed as a mixture of Protestants and Catholics. . . . If a union of all Irish-

born men ever be accomplished, Ireland will have the greatest and most varied materials for an illustrious nationality, and for a tolerant and flexible character in literature, manners, religion and life of any nation on the earth."

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